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GEORGES ROZET

ALGERIA

CENTENARY OF ALGERIA

GEORGES ROZET

ALGERIA

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Editions des
HORIZONS de FRANCE
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A LA MÉMOIRE
DES SOLDATS DE FRANCE QUI ▲ IL Y A
CENT ANS ▲ ONT LIBÉRÉ L'ALGÉRIE DU
JOUG BARBARESQUE ▲ PUIS L'ONT RENDUE
A SES JUSTES DESTINÉES EN Y INSTAURANT
LA " PAIX FRANÇAISE " ▲ A LA MÉMOIRE
DES COLONS MORTS A LA PEINE ▲ A TOUS
CEUX DONT LE LABEUR OBSTINÉ POUR-
SUIT ▲ AVEC LA COLLABORATION LOYALE
DES INDIGÈNES ▲ L'ŒUVRE DE CIVILISATION
HUMAINE ET DE GRANDEUR NATIONALE ▲
A TOUS LES JEUNES FRANÇAIS ▲ POUR QUI
C'EST UN DEVOIR DE CONNAITRE LA NOU-
VELLE FRANCE ET D'ENTENDRE SON APPEL ▲
CE LIVRE EST DÉDIÉ ▲ A L'OCCASION DU
CENTENAIRE DE L'ALGÉRIE

TO THE MEMORY

OF THOSE FRENCH SOLDIERS WHO ▲ ONE
HUNDRED YEARS AGO ▲ FREED ALGERIA
FROM THE YOKE OF BARBARY ▲ THEN
RESTORED IT TO ITS TRUE DESTINY BY
INAUGURATING THEREIN "FRENCH PEACE".
TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE COLONISTS
WHO DIED AT THEIR TASK ▲ TO ALL
THOSE DETERMINED WORKERS WHO ▲
WITH THE LOYAL COLLABORATION OF THE
NATIVES ▲ CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF
HUMAN CIVILIZATION AND ADD TO THE
NATIONAL GREATNESS ▲ TO ALL YOUNG
FRENCHMEN ▲ FOR WHOM IT IS A DUTY
TO GET TO KNOW NEW FRANCE AND TO
HEAR ITS CALL ▲ THIS BOOK IS DEDI-
CATED ▲ ON THE OCCASION OF THE
CENTENARY OF ALGERIA



The arrival at Algiers.

ALGERIA



ON the 4th of July, 1830, a soldier named Lombard, of the 17th Regiment of the Line, hoisted his shirt as an improvised flag above the smoking ruins of the Fort l'Empereur. After twenty-six days of an epic journey, and two weeks of hard fighting in the thicket between Sidi-Ferruch and the Fort, he was one of the proudest of the 37,000 men of the Armada that Charles had sent. Charles V and Louis XIV had been avenged and the Berber pirates—those sharks of the Mediterranean—had received their death blow. Algiers had surrendered. The corsair city, (veiled, like its women, but with the high cincturing ridges), had been taken without having been seen.

Even the General commanding, Count de Bourmont, was familiar only with the outskirts, the suburban gardens and the white houses



Summer Palace of the Governor.



Algiers. A street in the Native Quarter.

with the blind walls, their mysterious peep-holes, decked with bougainvillea, set among orange trees, cypresses and myrtles, some of which still exist about El Biar : a soft yet brilliant tapestry of verdure where, between two runs the *Rais*, those dreaded galley-owners, gave repose to their soul—ferocious or jovial according to their mood—and stretched their limbs, brutal or languid, in turn.

There is an indefinable charm about the architecture of these dwellings. Their long rooms run one into the other like a set of dominoes, joined only by the central *patio* with its twisted columns, and decorated only with carpets and Italian and Dutch tile-work. It is a kind of happy-go-lucky



Algiers. The Medersa.

architecture, quite in keeping with the type of people that it shelters. One is captivated by it; it is the first of the many spells cast by the country, and one begins to doubt the formal symmetry and the cold reason of our own great styles of architecture.

I can imagine the surprise of Lombard, of the 17th Regiment of the Line, on his discovery of Algiers in 1830. Even now, a century later, it comes as a thrill to the tourist who, twenty-six hours after leaving Marseilles, approaches the higher quarters of this White City. Even minus its lower portions and with six hundred Moorish houses obliterated, the native city remains very much as it then was—an unchanging relic



Algiers. Rue de la Kasbah.



Algiers. The Jardin d'Essai.

of past days. Seen from the sea, the city fancifully resembles a huge block of milk-white gypsum, characteristically rectangular and compact.

Its summit is reached by a fantastic network of tortuous streets, stairways, and archways. Houses squeezed as closely together as the seeds in a pomegranate—ancient, sordid, with corbels overhung with rough beams of Thuga wood, thrusting themselves over the narrow foot-way and all but joining overhead so as to obscure the sky. The architecture has many whimsical additions such as Italian gates, with floral decoration, painted in startling colours, often of Mediterranean blue, and opening furtively upon the inevitable *patio* with its Roman-Spanish-African mixture of archi-



Algiers. The "Admiralty".



Algiers, Villa near Hussein-Dey.



Blidah. The Holy Wood.

tectural features, where the only source of light is from the sky above.

From this queer labyrinth, almost like a nightmare city—such is the jumble—one occasionally gets a narrow gleam of azure—a glimpse of the sea, framed perhaps by a fig-tree branch thrusting out its leafy boughs into the sunshine from its place by a wall. It is an infatuating mixture, a mixture of humanity, colours, odours and noises. The guttural cries of the negro ass-drivers mingle with the soft chants from the Koranic schools and lusty oaths of swarthy Italian or Maltese. The women are strictly veiled, as in a winding sheet, white and ghostly in their balloon-like trousers, shuffling in Turkish slippers or, more frequently, their naked feet, among the mumbling, blind beggars clutching their wooden bowls in their mummy-



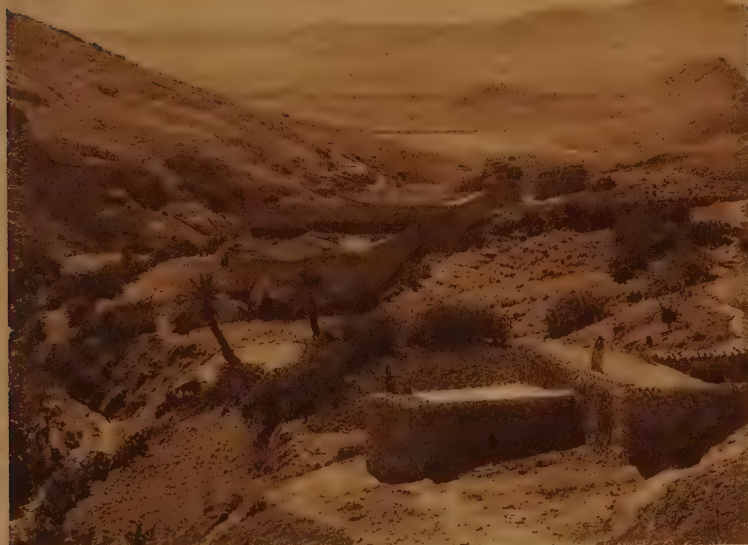
Chiffa Gorges. The Monkey Brook.



The Zaouia at Boghari.

like hands—"Alms, for the love of Allah". Shops no wider than cupboards where a display of blood-red meats contrasts with the pale faces of the Mozabite dealers—faces more sallow than the tripe on their stalls. The rich odours of fine African fruits, oranges and lemons, gleaming phosphorescent in the deep shadows, are set off by the flame-coloured pimentoes and by a scattering of over-ripe dates. The fragrance of jasmine strives successfully against the smells of meats and vague garbage. Elsewhere, in the meaner streets,

are the cosmopolitan drinking *cafés*, frequented by noisy dockers and grinning Senegalese, cheek by jowl with the Moorish *cafés* where tattered Mussulman Diogenes congregate and gossip, and with small, dirty-looking mosques, behind one of which is the miniature "Princess's Cemetery" set among three sacred fig-trees, and conveying an air of utter melancholy. The shade of Fromentin may



Boghari. (The gate of the Desert).



The Chelif oued, near Boghari.

re-visit its corner of the Rue Kléber; the *Kasbah* remains yet as he has described it.

One has to see these tatters of a stagnant past, this Turkish mushroom grown over the remains of Roman and Arab power, to realise from the spectacle of Algiers, as it is to-day, with what vigour France has opened the windows and aerated Islam. Let us pass by that intermediate period when Algeria was conquered by pioneers who, having bespoiled so many beautiful Moorish houses, dressed them up again with European façades, with columns of the Louis Philip period and with arcades like those of the Rue de Rivoli. In the years that have since passed by, this bastard architecture has acquired a certain attraction and what was once an eyesore has become a fit subject for the engraver and the artist. The inseparable admixture of Western and Arab life, as Mr. Zimmerman described it, is indeed one of the charms of Algiers.

But here is the modern town. Beginning



Near the Fortress at Boghari.



Boghar. "The Balcony of the Desert".

at the Place du Gouvernement and Bab Azoun, it has burst through the old walls of Kheir-ed-Dinn, has thrust itself, tier on tier, out towards the south and the hills, widening its thoroughfares at each bound, and providing itself with means of rapid transport and with splendid monuments, although the buildings may perhaps be somewhat too lofty and perhaps a shade too Parisian. Out beyond the new streets, on the Mustapha hill, decked with pine trees and cypresses, it seeks to preserve its green spaces and gardens, together with its hotels and native villas. Among these are the splendid summer palace



Courtyard of the "Transatlantique" hotel.

of the Governor General, and that jewel, the Bardo. These green spots preserve for all time the views away across the blue sea and the majestic Jurajura mountains.

Then, there is the vast harbour where the ancient « Admiralty » is so beautifully set and so friendly in mien, with its Spanish *Penon*, vividly reflected in the swelling



The Barrage of the Mina oued, near Relizane.

waters, the mosque almost at the edge of the water, and the silver outlines of the *Pêcherie*. Then there is the magnificent esplanade perched on the tall arches of the Boulevard de la République, inaugurated in 1860 by an Empress, and the solid extensions of the old Moorish Darse or pier. Here is the port which deals with the thousands of tons of cereals and produce from the interior, taking the appropriate form of a sickle in its projection towards the industrial chimney-shafts of Hussein Dey and Maison-Carrée.



The Environs of Miliana. The Iron-Mining District.

Close at hand is the splendid Jardin d'Essai, the botanical gardens, where tropical plants are brought under French cultivation. They descend down to the sea in park-like shrubberies and flower-beds, the grounds of an Algerian Versailles.

From one end of the town to the other there is the happy air which waits on youth, prosperity, and self-confidence. There is a working-class aristocracy of splendid



Cedars in the Teniet-el-Haâd forest.

humanity, a trifle rugged, perhaps, but open-charactered and hearty. There is nothing either boastful or aggressive in this bustling energy. It is like a big French town, yet with something more robust and more active, without either provincial pettiness or colonial egotism. The people—yesterday a mixed race—are to-day of a fixed type who admire and are attached to their capital city with strong ties of affection. These lusty children of Greater France, nationals or naturalised natives, cultured and not, all alike proved themselves worthy sons under the stress of the Great War.

Another attraction of the town life of Algiers lies, I feel, is the fact that one is surrounded by such charming composite landscapes, idyllic countryside of unvarying



Gardens at Hammam-R'bir.



Remains of the town at Mina, near Relizane.

charm, where the African flora is side by side with the trees of Europe, framing in perfect harmony the dainty Moorish houses and the neat and prosperous villages. There are glimpses of scenery that might form the subject of the old-fashioned lithographs of 1830, of old olive trees in a hollow of the Chemin de la Madeleine, or a Mussulman fountain at Birkadem; then all at once of an up-to-date golf course. A Franco-Arabian mixture of pretty names : El Biar, Bouzaréa, Birmandreis, with Frais Vallon, Beau Fraisier, and that little water-colour in three words-Climat de France.

Such, it seems to me, is the first smile of Algeria, whose countless aspects present to us such a diversity of expressions, akin in this respect to France, the Mother Country, but different in that its lofty mountain ranges and plateaux might be said to depict an island' twixt



The artificial Lake, at Sig, near St.-Denis-du-Sig.



Tombs at Aboukir.

the blue Mediterranean and the golden seas of sand stretching southwards, and also in the absence of a welcoming estuary by which one so often finds a way into other countries.

Yet it is by no means the level isle it may seem from the Hauts Plateaux, but one ruggedly carved out by the two massive transverse ranges of the Tellien and Saharan Atlas and their spurs. Elisée Reclus has compared these

formidable rolling mountains to the waves which follow one another incessantly on a sea beach. One might also compare them to a double ceremonial staircase rising abruptly from the sea-coast only to descend gently towards the Sahara in the south. Along the «corridors» between the ranges east to west came the Arab invaders of the seventh and the eleventh centuries, while the French conquest



Marabouts. Habra Plain.



Nomads, at Ained-Hout.

was made from the coast southward through the profound gorges which often had to be enlarged by pick and mine. Between these great lateral ranges the country is divided off into distinct zones by the transverse hills and so chaotic is the formation, especially the valleys with their isolated populations, that the brutal invading hordes of Arabs have rarely had a safe retreat. On the other hand, the methodical occupations of the Romans and, in later years, of the French, profited by this sud-division of the country which enabled them to reign there in strength.

It would be as unwise for the tourist as for the historian to pass by these preliminary geographical details, for, by their aid, one can understand



Market day at Pont-de-l'Isère.



Tlemcen.

how the country has been so ably developed and opened up. Gradually, the preconceived ideas and prejudices which led the first military and colonial chiefs astray have vanished. It was their view that Algeria was either entirely tropical and arid or else cold and humid. Such conditions do exist and in a marked degree, too, but only in certain particular regions and outside those months when Algeria is divinely sweet, equable, and charming to visitors. The real Algeria is one of contrasts and extremes.

By Nature's magnificent staircase, which I have already pictured in the mind's eye, let us ascend. First of all let us explore the first step, that gently hollow terrace where Algeria slopes down to the Latin sea. This



Tlemcen. The Holy Wood.



Mosque of Sidi Haloui.

narrow coastal band affords us, at first glance, a panorama of the colony, but also a *résumé* of its history and the most significant first-fruits of its modern transformation.

They must have been inhospitable coasts in the eyes of the early sailors; Salluste called it the « *littus importuosum* » in an epoch when the Romans did little but dig their harbours haphazardly here and there. Those ancient ports, or their remains, as well as those of the towns which commanded them, are to be found on every hand in Algeria. They are marked out and carved, for the most part, among the ochreous rocks overhanging the sea of deep azure or, at times, of intense indigo on which there is never a glitter, for the sun is never shining towards a spectator looking seawards. It is indeed the « *mare*



Sidi Yacoub, near Tlemcen.



PLJ

ALGER. MOSQUÉE SIDI ABD-ER-RHAMANE

ALGIERS. THE MOSQUE OF SIDI ABD-ER-RHAMANE



Tlemcen. The Arcades of the Grand Mosque.

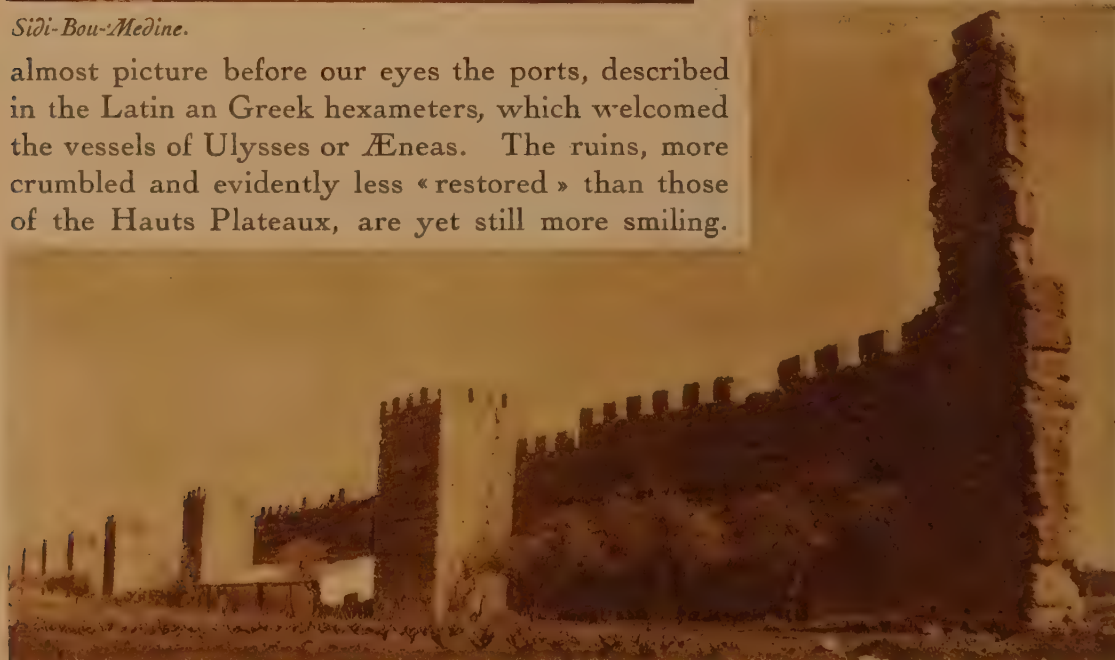


Sidi-Bou-Medine.

almost picture before our eyes the ports, described in the Latin an Greek hexameters, which welcomed the vessels of Ulysses or Æneas. The ruins, more crumbled and evidently less «restored» than those of the Hauts Plateaux, are yet still more smiling.

nigrum » of the ancients who were evidently primitive in their distinctions of colours. The fully-charged brushes of mediæval painters depicted many such an unrelieved, lifeless seascape. Before us, partly or completely ensconced amid delightful marine scenery, chosen for their situation as much as for their shelter, are the harbours of Tipaza, Cherchell, Dellys, Tigzirt and Port-Gueydon.

A fitting frame for the glistening Roman ruins is formed by these dainty little creeks. Here the sunlight of the Algerian coast is far from being of that glaring harshness which is commonly attributed to it, but is softened by an almost imperceptible sea mist. We can



The ancient ramparts of Mansourab.



Nedroma.

What matters it if to-day before a background of ruined Tipaza, less kindly treated by time than the near-by monument called the « Christian's Tomb », a monument of unknown age, a scene of crumbled façades, collapsed basilisks and basins, broken pedestals and capitals of once graceful columns, and of broken sarcophagi, the tourist now takes his *apéritif*? What matters it? The site remains, the wonderful site chosen by the Romans, and the very graciousness of the spot revivifies the ruins and rebuilds anew in our imagination all these cities. I remember that in this bay I saw three young Americans bathing: — clean-shaven and athletic, how strangely the sight conjured up in my mind the picture of some ancient bathing-beach of Roman times!



Tlemcen. The El Ourit cascade.



Oran. The Port.

Further on, there remains to-day only a very fine fragment of the aqueduct at Cherchell (the « Cesarea », of 200.000 inhabitants). It is an aqueduct of three stages, like the one at Pont du Gard, but more slender and more elegant. The very bleached stones must to-day be more eloquent in their appeal to the imagination than when they stood in all their pristine beauty and grace. There have been criticisms that the art of Numidia was the art of the architect purely and simply, but the art represented by the statues found at Cherchell—the *Apollo*, the *Bacchus*,



The Coast by Cap Ténès.

the *Satyr with the Panther*—is of the highest and is indeed of an elegance which is on the border-line of affectation. The *Apollo* especially may be regarded as the worthy brother, in its serene beauty and balance, of the *Venus de Milo*. And although east of Algiers, Dellys or Port-Gueydon are to-day little more than museums of ruins and



Mostaganem.

shadows of relics, Tigzirt, more happy than Cherchell and Tipaza, still can boast, upon its sombre rocks, a temple of the Third Century which seems to answer and smile beyond the waves of the Mediterranean across to the Sicilian ruins of Taurominium.

Rugged yet idyllic, though it may be, this Algerian coast was never closed to modern development. To the extreme west and to the east of the chief port, Algiers, with a symmetry that may almost be said to be providential, there have grown up harbours and towns which some day may rival even Algiers itself.

First there is Oran, preceded itself by Mers-el-Kebir, the « Portus divinus » of the ancients, and which, within its mile-long jetty, passes a great traffic in heavy goods. Oran is helped, too, by satellites that Algiers has not; Beni-Saf, a port dealing with ore, Arzeu, which deals with the alfalfa and vegetable



A Street in Old Ténès.



Roman Bridge at Ténès.

hair traffic, and Mostaganem, a name which echoes the *furia* of the Turcos, where a large trade in Oranese cereals and wines is done.

Oran boasts no Roman origin; it is above all a new town, a town which has eliminated, or nearly so, the idle native element and in European manner lives with full lungs and at full stretch of its muscles. Long ago the Spaniards themselves owned it—the prisoners of their own conquest, blockaded in the forts with which they had protected it. Then followed, after the French conquest, steady Spanish labourers, stoical, readier to work on this foreign soil than in their native country, in the manner of emigrants who are filled with the hope of amassing sufficient wealth and returning some day their to Homeland. Yet it was Algeria that conquered over those who sought only to profit from her, for



Interior of the Mosque at Old Ténès.



Cherchell. The Great Thermæ.

these labourers became, for the most part, good and loyal Algerians. Few persons, indeed, can visit the old quarter of the port without being momentarily under the impression of travelling in the Peninsula itself. The inhabitants may be tattered, but they are one and all proud of their «*Porte d'Espagne*» with its heavy escutcheons in bas-relief, its houses perched high up at the Kasbah, with their wide, wooden-balconied fronts, lime-washed with delicate tints, such

as charm so much in the little streets of Granada, and with their *posadas* nestling under their squat domes. All this part is populated by the deep-voiced folk whose tongue is so sonorous yet grave withal.

Elsewhere the town is a handsome modern one, with long streets and boulevards laid out with the prodigality of the newly rich, showing off its splendid town-planning skill, as in the



Arzew. The Port.



Cherchell. Gallery in the Museum.

Letang Promenade, which runs alongside the port, with its terrace of palm, fig and plane trees. It teems with life, activity, and beauty. The union of the French and Spanish races is demonstrated by the elastic grace, the bright complexion and the lustrous dark eyes of the women and young girls. The joy of living is in the air. One has but to see a Shrove Tuesday in Oran, when the whole town turns out and sits in a double row, on chairs and benches, the whole length of the pavements, laughing and joking with a gaiety in which there are no false notes, if one is to

appreciate how happy is the mixture of the two races, and how exuberant such an adolescent city may be.

At the other extremity of the coast there is Bona, a phosphate and iron-ore shipping port. This is another town equally alert and as sprightly as a pretty girl of the south, richer than Oran in its population of French origin. Here the archæologist may leave profitably aside the commercial quarters of the port in



Tipaza. The Forum.

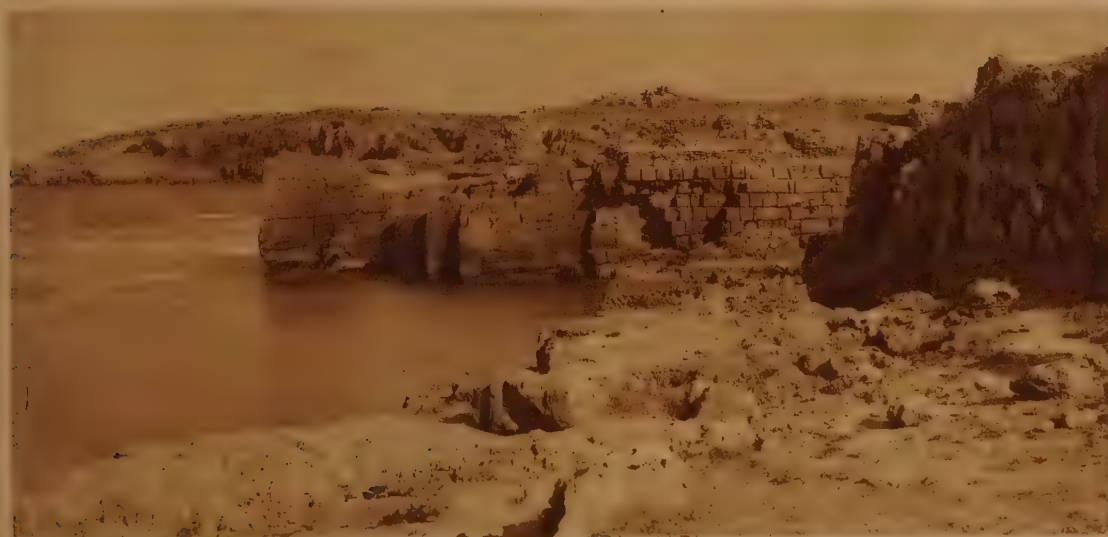
order to visit the ruins of Hippone and to see its cyclopean foundations and subterranean chambers, its remnants of Roman villas and mosaics, a fore-taste of those we shall see in Tunisia. «Cool carpets», as these mosaics have been termed by the author of «Villes d'Or», they need but a jet of water in order to revive instantly their tarnished colours. What polychromic art, what naive and precious confidences of the daily life of the Roman colonies, of their farming, their hunting, nay, even of their voluptuousness! And what a charm there is to be got from climbing above



Cherchell. Roman Theatre.

Bona into the forest of Bougeaud and reaching an altitude almost equal to that of Chamonix, and in surveying the wonderful gulf which, on the return journey, is enshrouded in delicate evening mist, its houses illuminated, and its waters transformed into a phosphorescent lake.

There are yet other ports and harbours between Bona and Algiers. Philippeville, entirely an artificial harbour and Stora, which it quite eclipses;



On the Shore, at Tipasa.



Sidi-Ferruch Cape.

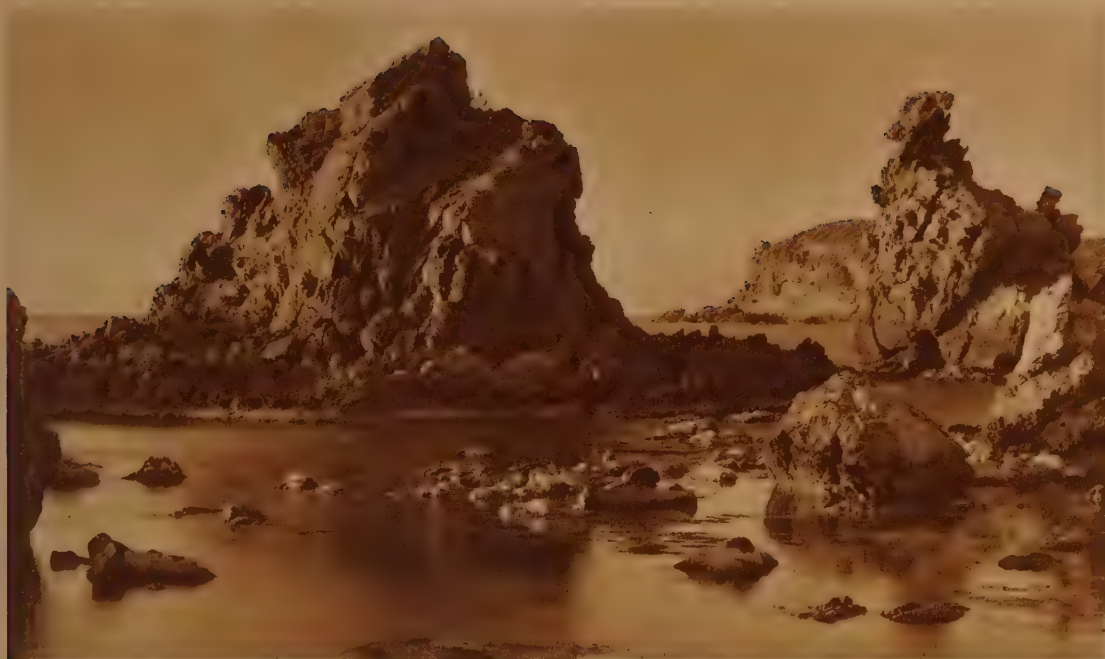
Collo, where vast quantities of wrinkled corkwood are handled. Last, but by no means least, there is Bougie, the «emporium» of Kabylia, hollowed out by nature at the foot of the Kabyle range, a town of white houses so coquettishly grouped beneath the shelter of Cap Carbon that one would hardly believe that they formed anything more than a quiet winter resort. For many years the schemes for the enlargement of all these ports remained in official pigeon-holes, and the towns themselves made slow progress, but after 1870 the liberality of their Chambers of Commerce enabled them to



The Institut Agricole at Maison-Carrée.

avoid the necessity of calling for the requisite funds upon an impoverished mother-country, and to-day they are prosperous and full of bright hope for the future.

They stand upon a coast which is as rich as it is splendid, its wealth being the first, yet eloquent, sign of the French administration. We remember the definition of the Sahel, as Fromentin saw it in 1852 : « I mean



Near Menerville. Fig-Tree Cape.

by the word « landes » the area where everything grows at random, where the plough has never been seen and where the produce is merely that of a soil that has neither been worked nor even fertilised—the despair of the colonists yet to come ». Groundless despair, indeed, for they eventually triumphed. I do not want to speak only of the vital artery which was driven through this very Sahel, the road which, beginning at Algiers, runs along the western coast, turns inland to the Kabyle range, to come back along the coast from Bougie to Jijelli. This is the triumphal route by means of which the travel services of the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique have duplicated the great central line of the Algerian State Railways and the P. L. M. It forms a winding Corniche which, creeping round the sides of the rocks from Chenoua to Cape Ténès, leaps across chasms and rivers and loses itself temporarily in the woods before reaching the inhospitable port of Ténès, with its Berber fortifi-



The Palestro Gorges. Valley of the Isser oued.



Bougie.

cations. It is a symmetrical Corniche that climbs the Grandes Falaises, those magnificent rose and lilac coloured cliffs whose deep, long folds seem like some immense tapestry or a gigantic theatre curtain; what a continuous panorama to unfold for those who love to take their way leisurely to the steady purr of a motor or to recline at ease in the armchair of a Pullman! But there is the utilitarian aspect also of the Sahel, for although this region, three quarters of a century ago, was of no use to anyone but the sportsman seeking the game of the marsh and thickets, you may watch today the heavy waggons rolling along the road, laden with boxes and baskets. They carry down to the quayside, early-vegetables and fruit, hogsheads of wine and bags of cereals produced all along this coast line and the country behind it, more particularly



Bougie. The Sarrasine-Gate.



Bougie.

from the plain of Mitidja, a real horn of plenty stretching from Tipasa to Maison-Carrée, about a hundred kilometres, marking out the ancient *Fhas*, but more commonly known today as the "outskirts" of Algiers.

In these times of economic difficulties and of food scarcity, who is there, who today can smile, as once the world smiled, at the « Gardener-Marshal », Bugeaud, who founded the first of the seven hundred and fifty colonising villages of Algeria?

The aspect of these villages is pleasing, not to say impressive. Take, for instance, Guyotville, Kolea, Saoula, or Cheragas—they might be described as morsels of France, grafted in some way upon the deep red Algerian soil. The houses are white and clean, without any particular style, but their charm is that of a more recent and newer Languedoc or Provence, set off with taller and



The Cape Carbon.



The Corniche Road between Cavallo and Mansourab.

more robust cypresses than are found at home. On the doorsteps may be seen sturdy brown boys, pretty dark skinned girls who look one straight in the eye, with calm smiling faces. These are the robust and happy offspring of our first southern colonists who laboured amidst the tangled brushwood.

To-day we see the triumph of many efforts, often unskilfully directed, although sometimes the mistakes brought results as remarkable as they were unforeseen. There was, indeed, a time when it was thought possible to acclimatise tropical plants on this coast, plants like sugar cane, tea, coffee and pineapples. For the protection of the plantations belts of cypress trees and reeds were grown, but even these did not prevent the tender plants from perishing. Yet this procedure proved excellent later, against the vigour of the westerly



Vineyards by the shore at Cape Aokas.

winds, and was wonderfully helpful with regard to the early-vegetable crops which to-day constitute the wealth of Sahel. These hedges of reeds give a curious aspect to the district. Look at the slopes of Guyotville, streaked with screens of reeds, seeming at a distance like a huge army on parade, with bayonets at the slope! There are sheltering behind them great masses



The Corniche Road between Jijelli and Bougie.

of delicious grapes, army-corps of artichokes, squadrons of forced tomatoes, whose market value is so high that no expense in cultivation is too great in the colony, whether it be irrigation canals, or windmills, for raising ample water for their needs.

Still more impressive is the Mitidja plain, the first stage of most of the Algerian tours. Yet even there Africa does not display that typically exotic scenery that the uninitiated traveller usually associates with the continent, those travellers who do not know how to appreciate the intermediate stages in the transformation from things European to things African. One gets a picture of a few cactus hedges or the silhouette of strange trees, brandishing their spiny branches. Now and then one sees a Kabyle couple, the man with bare legs, a many coloured scarf around the hair of the woman, on their way to their labours. And in the



The Chabel Gorges. The Sugar-Loaf.



Jemila. Cardo Maximus and Temple of Septimius Severus.

air is the delicate perfume of burning cedar, an odour that the lovers of Algeria recognise instinctively. That is all the tourist finds of things African, but he would be surprised did he know a little more of the country's history.

It was here that our first colonists struggled—militiamen who followed the plough with their guns slung over the shoulder, who struggled heroically against the swamps and fevers. The Mitidja is a new Beauce, a little more bare than the other, but with more varied crops and perhaps richer : luxurious vines between the rows of which there are to be seen early vegetables, elsewhere, fields of cereals, fields of *geranium-rosa*, and long belts of tobacco. Across this agricultural « sea » on each side of the broad « Route de la conquête » are farms now old, similar to the Arlesian « mas », except for their clumps of eucalyptus.



Door of a covered passage.



The Valley of Guergour.



Jemila. The Arch of Caracalla.

There are even surprisingly modern farm plants and buildings, the last-mentioned being iron structures as extensive as a railway terminus, where scientific methods of wine-making are employed. There are gigantic reservoir tanks in factories employing as many as two thousand workers, where everything is handled by means of rails and waggons, for speed is essential in dealing with the vintage owing to its too rapid fermentation in torrid Septembers.



The Theatre.

The Algerian vineyards, once ill-managed and left to the shortsighted local methods, are now capable of producing wines approaching in flavour, delicacy, and bouquet those of France. It should be also mentioned that at one of the extremities of the Mitidja, Maison-Carrée, this Algerian Beauce has, in conjunction with the Agricultural Institute of Algeria, its comprehensive and practical Conservatoire whose results

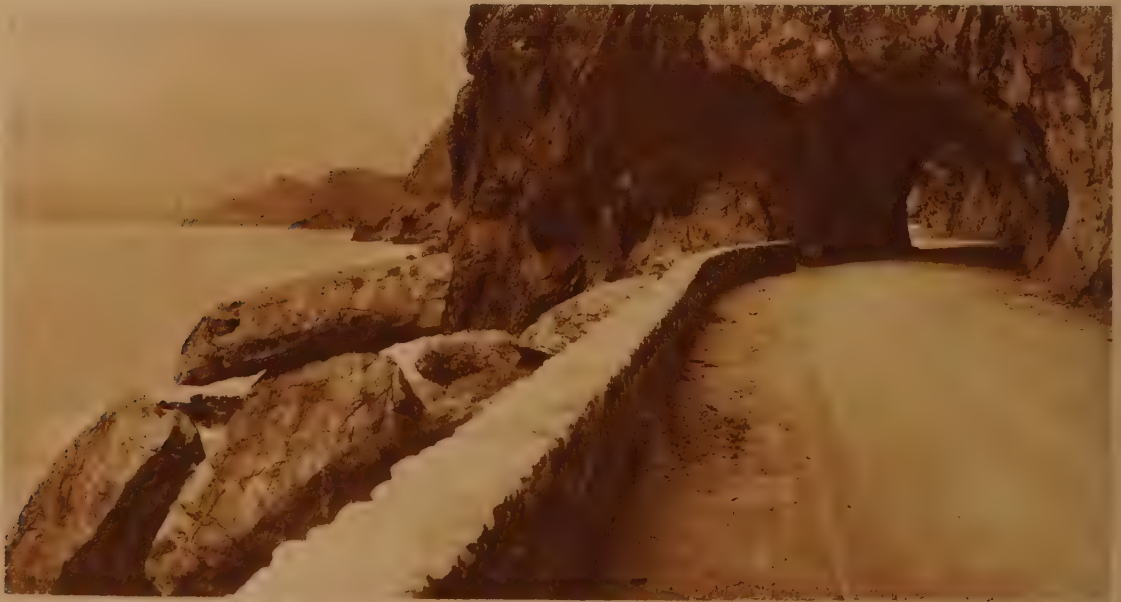


Near Aumale. The Mill of Pont-des-Orgues.



The village of Guergour near Jemila.

may be observed right up to the cereal area of the Constantine region. And now let us penetrate into the interior, for one cannot pretend to unroll a detailed film of this mountainous labyrinth, and a fresco painting of Algeria could only be done with the broadest strokes and outlines. We may make our way there by one or other of the narrow staircases which, like those in the theatres of the ancients, serve as benches. These were the paths made during the French conquest, yet they are still the paths used by tourists. To them have been added



The Road to Jijelli.



Arab Mill at Guergour.

the great railway through the centre, and the roadway from Oran to Bona, which enable us to explore from one end to the other, the steps of the Tellian Atlas.

Here again, history and human industry have left or impressed on to Algeria a symmetry which nature had denied. On each side of Algeria and on the old Kabyle range are inscribed, on magnificent monuments, souvenirs of ancient Rome, and of the Moghreb of the middle ages. In the east, headed by the old citadel of Constantine, there is a great constellation of splendid Roman ruins.

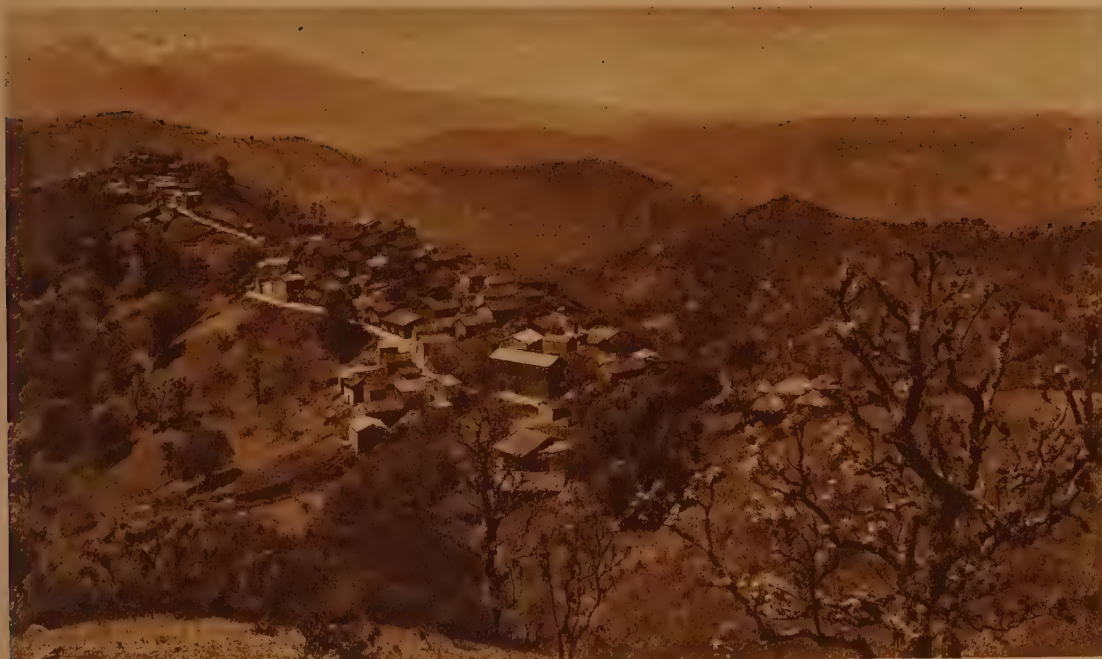


Jijelli. The Fort and Lighthouse.



The valley of the El-Kébir oued.

In the west there are the remains of the Berber age and the delights of Arabian architecture. Below Algiers there is a railway which runs to the very threshold of the great desert, to Djelfa. From Oran and Constantine run two other railways, still more daring in many respects, which press forward to Figig in the one case and to Tuggurt in the other. Between these noble monuments of the past and these bold realities of the present day there is a succession of natural wonders, of areas given over to production of many kinds—here on the surface, there far down in the earth—but if this land is a rich storehouse of the Earth's treasures it only yields them up to the inhabitants at the price of ceaseless toil and skill. Let us journey from west to east, dwelling perhaps at first on the trials and troubles of the past. Near the coast we have seen the ramparts of old Ténès, the sun speckled minarets and Arabian cupolas of Nedroma and the ruins of Honein, the ancient port of Tlemcen. Tlemcen itself seen from beyond the desolate salt *Sebkha* of Oran, at an altitude of over 800 metres, provides us with the most agreeable surprises, Tlemcen, happily surnamed « The Orchards » by the Romans, later became Mussulman under the warlike and sumptuous Almoravide Sultans. From the latin « Pomaria » she has derived a Virgilian setting, amid gushing brooklets, and half hidden among olive and fruit trees—



Near Fort National. Aint Timimoun.

« A fitting place in which to spend eternity » said the holy marabout Si Bou Medine on his arrival there, persecuted, broken and footsore. From the Almoravide Tagrart and from El Eubbad where the marabout, whose prayer was heard by Allah, was buried, Tlemcen has preserved far more perfectly than any other town of Algeria has done, classic specimens of the Arab-Berber art, culture brought back from Spain. Whether we regard the Grande Mosque, the *mirhab* of which is a worthy compeer of that of Cordova, or the mosque of Sidi Bel Hassen, now transformed into a museum, Morocco itself can show nothing finer or more delicate. According to their dates, these are the Chartres or the Amiens of moorish religious architecture, so different from our



Yakouren. Corkwood ready for export.



Kabyle cemetery.

own Gothic in which the strictly rectangular arrangement of the towers and naves is tempered by delicate partitioning and intricate tracery.

Our cathedrals seem to aspire to reach to the sky by thrusting up their needle like pinnacles; those of this country seem to really join themselves with the heavens by the lustrous sky-blue tiles of their minarets. The masterpiece of this architectural style, the balance of which is so remarkable and the general proportions so fine, is the Mosque of Sidi Bou Medine, wherein has been preserved all the beauty of line, the carving of its timbers and the moulding of its plaster. Its heavenly blue minaret is thrust out towards the sky like the rest, yet is held solidly, in appearance, to earth by its massive cedar doors with their bronze decoration. And what can we say of the path which leads up to it? Dotted with islamic « Alyscamps »,



Michelet. The Market.



The Holy Village of Azref—of marabouts, and caïds. Forbidden even to the Kabyle People.



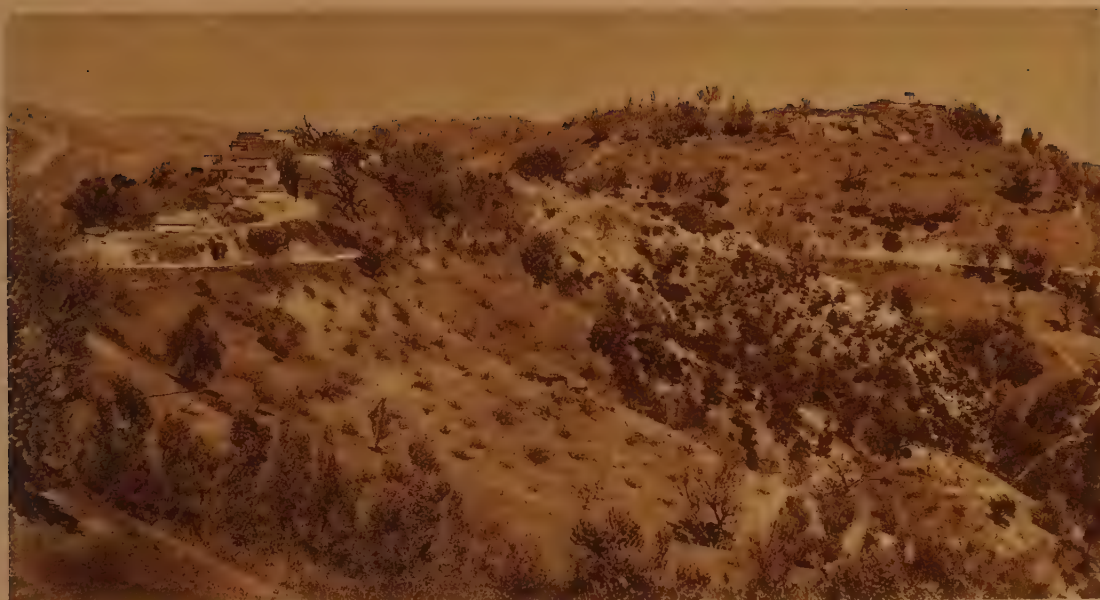
Aoughi-Fesselat.

ancient tombs under domes supported upon tiny steles, gaudily illuminated like the pages of some mediæval missal. Here, even more than in the mussulman cemeteries of Algiers, death is surrounded by serenity and grace. It requires some effort of imagination to realise that the neighbouring city of Mansourah, now an utter ruin, was built in front of Tlemcen (which he was besieging) out of pure spite, by an enraged sultan. For, whilst the peaceful city has survived, the once pretentious upstart town has slowly disintegrated. Only the ramparts remain—like an Avignon, only the shells of whose walls still exist—and, as though testifying to the eternity of art, one last minaret lingers, unique yet sublime.

On the other hand, modern life is symbolised by the eager search for and the copious use



In Greater Kabylia.



Villages in Greater Kabylia.



The Marabout of Koukou.

of water. Water, indeed, is the one word around which we could write the whole political and economic story of Algeria, whether it be the Tell, the Hauts Plateaux or the Desert. Water is the life blood of this « regio aridissima », and « changed fields » spoken of by the Latin poets and orators. Not that the lack of water is as great as has been thought, even though it is often in the precious and fertilising form of snow. During the brief periods when the snow abounds on the mountain peaks the water from the innumerable « oueds », which of old fashioned the deep canyons of the Tell Atlas, rush impetuously towards the sea, yet too often leaving behind them a track of disaster. The great task for man in this region is to retain and direct aright these wild streams. The whole bibliography of irrigation, by Brunhes,



Michelet and the Jurjura Range.

Flamant and R. Mares, may almost be described as a propitiatory hymn in honour of this task. A phrase of the Gouverneur Général summarises the matter : « Algeria will not attain its full development until not a drop from its watercourses is allowed to reach the sea. »

The Romans began and carried to a certain point this work of irrigation, but their efforts were largely negated by the Vandals and the Hillalians, but it has now been resumed with great energy. In Southern Oran, for instance, water descends from the Daya Mountains, from the Saida District, formerly in



The "Zaouia" of Koukou, near Michelet.

subjection to the Emir Abd-el-Kader, or from Tiaret, the ancient capital of the schismatic Rostemedians. The streams are known by the names of the Mekerra, the Mebtou, Fergoug and the Tiaret «oueds». These waters have all gushed down from the mountains in cascades similar to those which leap the Safsaf cliffs near Tlemcen.



The Jurjura mountains.

They are awaited at the bottom of the valley by canals, barrages, and a thousand other ingenious and effective means of retention and distribution.

There is the high plain of Sidi-el-Abbas, dominated by an extremely curious town, seemingly banal at first glance. Tourist brochures describe it as a town « without character » a somewhat disdainful phrase. Yet is it not a distinctive character that it is a city which at one time was fortified according to the plan of a geometrical quadrilateral, and built in draughtboard fashion after the style of Roman Timgad ? Throughout this area, where Spanish blood and customs of



In Kabylia.

Spain still survive, and where even the moments of rest of the working folk are called, as in Andalusia, "cigarettes" there is a striking illustration of the triumph of the hereditary art of irrigation for the pursuits of agriculture, the result of much study and research, and due also to a fine spirit of local cooperation, resulting in a distribution system



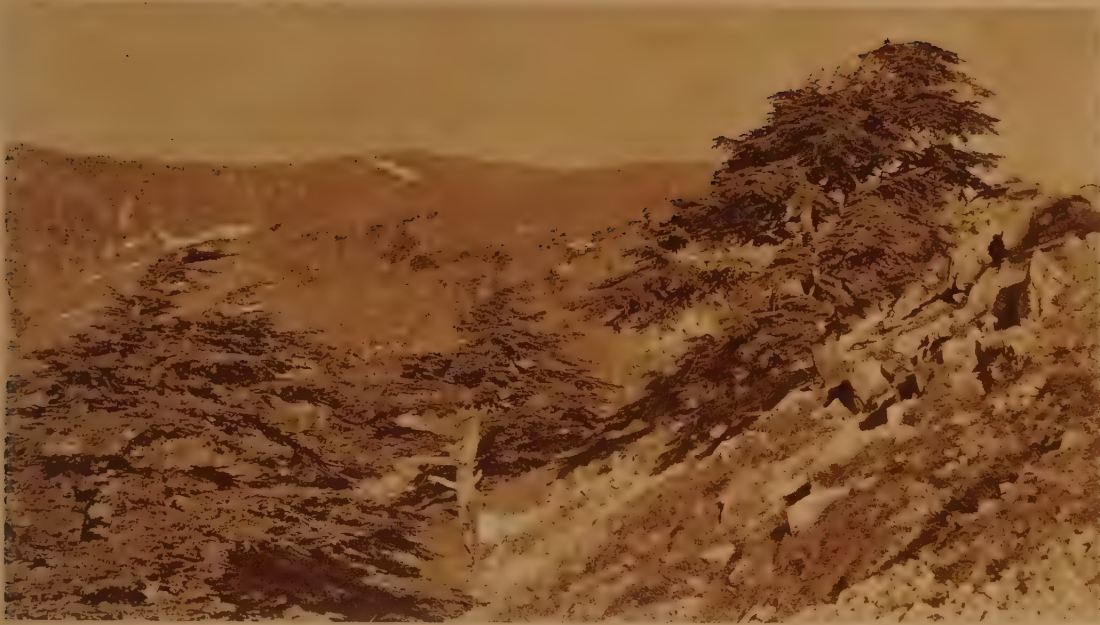
The valley of the Djema oued.



A village in Greater Kabylia.

laid out with a precision and dignity worthy of a « futurist » city. This is a fine example of the influence of French colonisation. Prodigious examples of irrigation have been wrought, methods even of « dry farming » which the Americans have adopted (yet which the Romans had begun in Algeria in their day); and there is to-day a Canaan of cereals, vines and olive trees in the neighbourhood of Mascara, another town fortified on the geometrical plan. In the Relizane district, noted for its luxuriant gardens, this paradoxical Algerian soil boasts of petroleum-bearing areas at Tliouanet and Saint-Aime, where gigantic boring towers and gusher derricks raise their gaunt skeletons to the sky.

Irrigation from a very rural and primitive beginning, has



In the Jurjura mountains

developed into something on a grandiose scale. Close to the sea, above Sainte-Barbe-du-Tlelat, at Saint-Denis-du-Sig, above Perrégaux especially, and at Oued-Fergoug, there is a remarkable spectacle of the more than herculean toil that has set up vast barrage-reservoirs where the trapped water is collected by millions of cubic feet, capable of irrigating many thousands of acres. Further to the east there is the Cheliff the one large river of the Colony, whose course like that of the Loire is so sinuous yet it runs between banks steeper and narrower than those of the Loire. Its valley is so confined and so inaccessible to rainfall that it would form a species of desert but for the great barrage at Oued-Fodda which will soon mark a



Kabylia. Near the Tirourda Pass.

new epoch in the progress of irrigation. All along the railway from Saint-Denis-du-Sig to Orleansville are to be seen cotton fields abundantly watered under torrid skies in summer, and receiving all the moisture which is essential to their prosperity. The white tunics and burnous of the workmen are conspicuous on these



The Gorge of the El-Kébir oued.

fertile fields, and everyone seems to be inspired with the ever growing hope of freeing the Mother Country from one of its heaviest economic burdens, the importation of raw cotton.

This Cheliff hothouse is a splendid spot from which to view the Tellian Chain. Yet it is a glacial corridor in winter and endures the greatest variations in temperature of all Algeria. Seen from the plateau on which Orleansville stands, the Ouarsenais appears to be a citadel out of all proportion. From the esplanade of Miliana the panorama is still more fantastic.

Miliana ! It is one of those beautiful Algerian names that always sound a fanfare in the ears and recall the pictures of the bayonet charges of the heroic days of 1840. The very situation of this pretty little town, astride the Zaccar,



PL. II

SIDI HALOUI, PRÈS TLEMCEN

SIDI HALOUI, NEAR TLEMCEN



Market in the environs of Chevreul.

on the high road to the forestal splendours of Algeria, and between the sea and the Tell Atlas, is alone sufficient to make it famous. Above Hamman-R'hira—an African-Contrexeville, with famous hot springs, warmed, so the natives say, by King Solomon himself—Miliana is only 50 kilometres, as the crow flies, from that Alpine forest, Teniet-el-Haad. If the forestal scenery of the colony is not its greatest feature, and though the title «forestal» is often bestowed to



Beni-Abbes (Little Kabylia).



Lake Melab, in the environs of La Galle.

what would be better described as « woods », there, at least, the forests are on a truly legendary scale.

The forest of Teniet, which has no equal in France !... The ancient and sacred tree, as hard and rot-proof as a metal, giving off beneath the rays of the sun a perfume like incense, stretches forth great arms which stand out perpendicular to the trunk, and from which strangely thin and flat fans of verdure, extend. The Sultana, the Messaou, the Parapluie, such are the names of some of these trees, the latter like a cathedral dome visible from Miliana itself, a distance of more than twelve leagues!



Lighthouse of Stora, near Philippeville.



Environs of Borǧ-Boni (Little Kabylia).



Philippeville, the port.

Braving the onslaught of the winds and the lightning, though marked everywhere with scars, standing amid their own piled-up debris, these patriarchs of the forest remain fearlessly upright, aged, yet ever young.

Close up to Algiers, is the double central artery—high-road and railway—of Algeria. The road, reclaimed from the marshes of Mitidja, rises over a distance of less than sixty miles, to the Alpine heights of Medea, afterwards the traversing principal chain, through the gorge of Ben Chicao.

The start is one delightfully suggestive of leisure. Its first stages are marked out by the charming little settlers' towns : Boufarik, a perfect model of agricultural conquest of the soil, the



Sea-shore at Stora.



Vineyard near Philippeville.

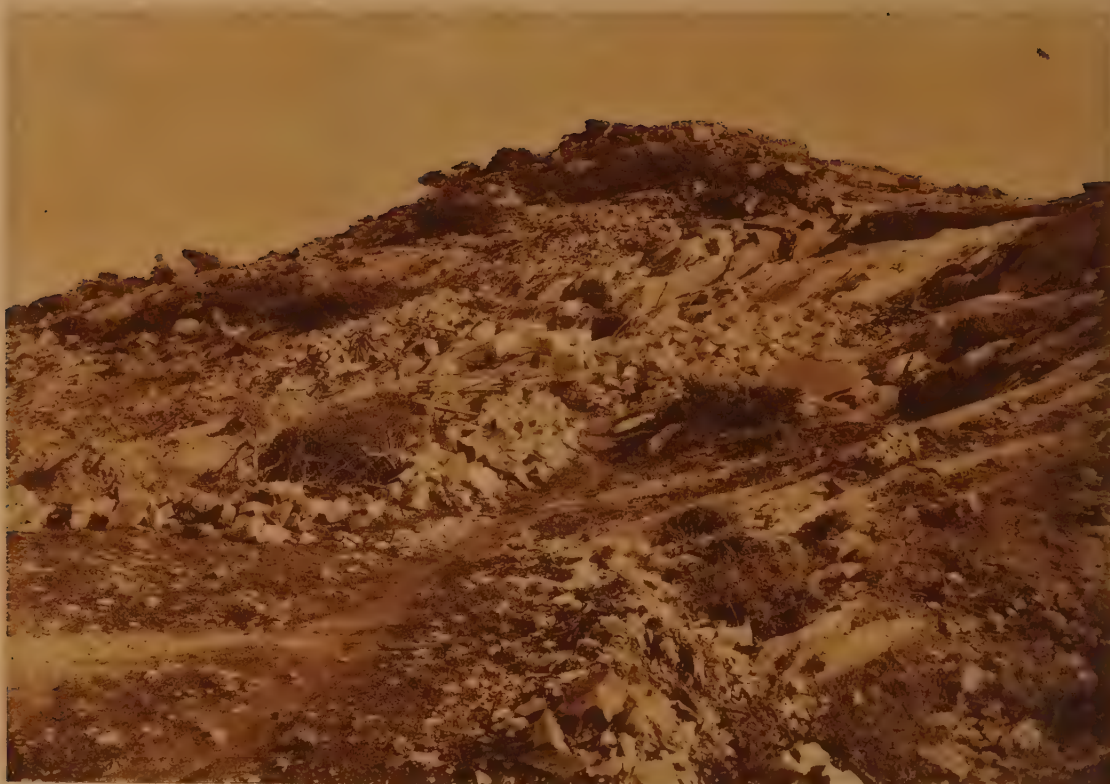
centre of great wine stores, of orange groves worthy of the Hesperides. Two things stand out in the memory : the monumental arbor of shade afforded by its plane trees and the appealing statue of Blandan. Then, Blida l'Andalouse, the " town of roses, jasmines and women ", of grace, tranquility and perfumes,



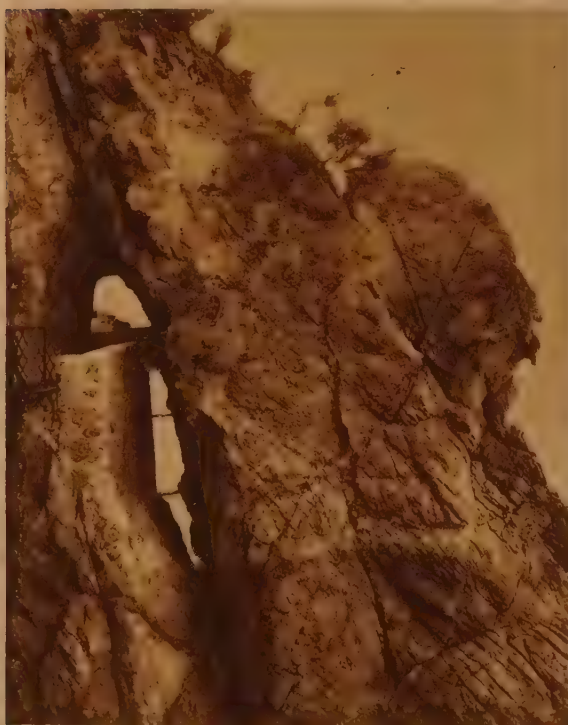
Stora.

near its tutelary Sacred Wood where venerable olive-trees droop over the marabout of Sidi-Yacoub. Overlooking it also, is a mountain clothed with cedars of a dreamy bluish green tint and by the Ski-Club of Chrea, in a strangely contrasting belvedere of snow above the motley tints of the orange and lemon trees in flower.

Thus barred off by the Atlas mountains at Mitidji, the road veers



Marble quarry of Filfila.



Stora Pass.

to the south, still accompanied by the railway, through the Gorges of Chiffa. Here, two imposing views are combined; the highway suspended on the side of the mountain, the railway playing with the torrent a continuous game of hide and seek, with tunnels and arches. The engineers have here achieved positively heroic feats. Are we in the Alps, or the Pyrenees?... One would think so were it not for huge fig-trees with the tentacles of an octopus, which hold the rock better than would iron clamps. French cultivations, but on an African scale. Where else could be seen these enormous vine stocks which wind their knotted length over the slopes of Medea and Loverdo... Where are panoramas equal to those which come into view on passing the Col de



Ain-Mokra.

Chicao, the intensity of their spring verdure, the variety in pattern exhibited by agricultural cultivations, the delightful vistas of mountain flowers?

The same surprise, the same spectacle of French mountains more highly coloured and, so to speak, a few tones higher in pitch, greets us on the road which, starting from Algiers, goes to Aumale, the severe melancholy of this fortified post on the border of the region of the Steppes forming a striking contrast. Sixty miles farther on, after making a junction at Djelfa, these two roads continue in the form of a track through the open desert. Such are the north to south routes of Algeria. Over the length of two motor-car runs, a fantastically rapid variation of climates, with fanciful ranges of temperature: warmth and mimosas on



Iron mines of El-Haba, near Philippeville.



Bona.

the coast; from Medea to Djelfa, snow perhaps, sometimes up to the middle of February; at Laghouat, the hot Sahara sun beats down on the palm trees... Touring in Algeria is a film of rapid episodes with violent contrasts, which remain for ever imprinted on the memory. Before pushing towards the south, a stop must be made at the bastion or foothill of the coast line chain called Kabylia... A mountain mass dating to the origin of time if ever there was one: an archæan nucleus, as the geologists term it, a vestige of the prehistoric Thyrrenian system. It is laden with a confused history replete with legends of violence, owing to the fact that the Kabyle mountains, in the same way as, lower down, the Mountains of Aures, were the centres



Basilica of Saint-Augustin, near Bona.



The Port of Bona.

of resistance of the natives, the fortresses in which they sought refuge against the flood of human invasions, and where they survive still, maintaining their human types, their habits, and their national pride amid natural surroundings which are also strange and dramatic. Berbers, they are termed, which term embraces the obscure

Lybians, the Getulæ, the Numidians of Salust, and, still more mysterious, the Chanaanites and Sabians. Races most certainly very different from the Arabs, from whom they have received, by force, an "islamism which is only skin-deep".

Among all these isolated strongholds of ancient Africa, the Great Kabylia has remained a striking example. Even the roads, though they merely skirt it, on the



Beach of Saint-Cloud, near Bona.



Tobacco-growing near Bona.

way to Constantine, pass through sites of tragic majesty. Here overhanging the Isser, are the Gorges of Palestro, which almost became the Thermophylæ of colonisation here in the revolt of 1871. Farther on, there are the Iron Gates, a double escarpment of slaty black, with vegetation of a funereal greenish-blue.



Cap de Garde.

The Kabyle mountain mass, in itself a gigantic horse-shoe formation of the Djurjura, extends towards the sea in a half-circle, bristling inside with foothills and chains of hillocks of a strange aspect. Each of the knolls and hillocks has a village perched on its summit. Seen from Fort-National or from the environs of Michelet, on a clear spring morning the panorama is of peculiar novelty. In the background, the snow-



Cork trees at Bugeaud.

covered peaks of Djurjura, a fantastic play of cream tints, set off by delicate shades. Before it, on each of the peaks, are perched villages, like buds on their stems, but the eye seeks in vain for that slender egret—the steeple—which gives our villages their personality and individual aspect. The villages here, with their flat houses, tile-roofed in the Roman style, low built and in close rows, all identical, have the shapeless aspect of beds of shells encrusted in the rock. On the flanks and in the valleys, there is rich and varied vegetation, produced in abundance by the minute distribution of the streamlets from the mountain. The Kabyle is, in point of fact, a natural hydraulic engineer who, without surveying instruments



La Calle.



Sunset at La Calle.

or plans, can give lessons to the geometricians. He is also an arduous worker, who, like an Alpine farmer, is not afraid of hanging on to a slender cord in order to till and fructify three square yards of vine.

Thus variegated with streamlets and channels, pitted by the primitive plough and the hoe, nature here, with her many changes and with her bright and deep greens, seems to blend into a harmonious whole. The background of snow-covered crests rising against a very fine azure blue, compact swards,



La Calle.



Cascade of Hammam-Meskoutine.



Constantine.

clumps of green oaks, alternating with the silvery palor of the olive trees, with the coral tints of the huge trunks of fig-trees or the twisted arms of the ash trees; bushes of nopals, with branches like the claws of a crab or lobster, and bushes of agaves with their slender verdigris stems; the white and brown spots formed by the villages; above everything, the Lella-Khadidja, dominating with its height of 7,550 feet the whole of the scene; lower down, finally, the forest of Yakouren, with its well stripped cork trees; landscape views ready made, which possess to a supreme degree, what painters call style. Humanity swarms here with the same astonishing density as in Flanders. The Kabyle is different from the native hitherto en-



The cones at Hammam-Meskoutine.



Constantine.

countered—the Moor of Algeria, a shopkeeper or tradesman, the hybrid Koulougli and, finally, the Arab proper, the descendant of the conquerors of Africa, the Arab with his tall figure, his resolute and noble features, his gait, slow and majestic even beneath his rags. He is lazy, too, but in a mystic way, as his origin and



Constantine, viewed from one of its bridges.

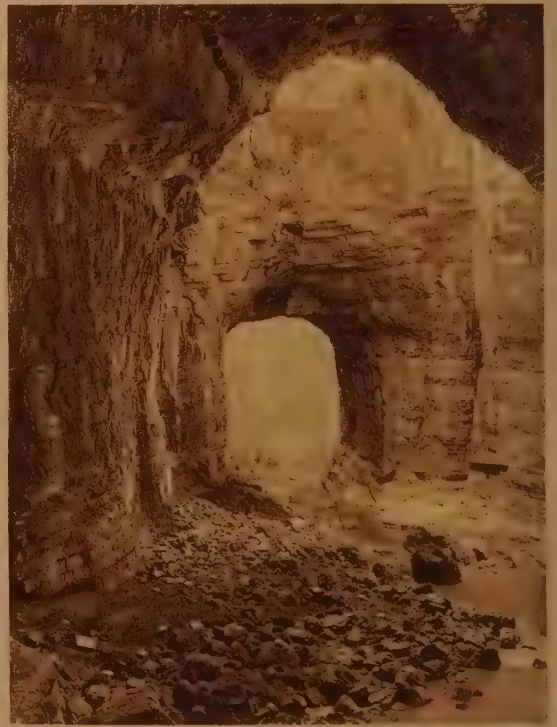
his poetry authorise him to consider male work as disgraceful, and to throw all labour upon the woman, veiled and under close watch. For him, the guiding rule is that of the least effort; he is a workman or farmer without regularity or ambition, postponing his material satisfactions until Paradise is reached, and contenting himself for the moment with making the best of his meagre pittance or enjoying his cup of coffee



Slopes of the Djebel-Kasserou, near Batna.



Gorges of Rummel.



At Constantine.



The Thermæ of Carcalla, at Hippone.

drop by drop, with the pleasure of a poet. Passionately fond, nevertheless, of useless and ostentatious movements which remind him of his independence and nomad habits of bygone days, often covering hundreds of miles without any other



Sarcophagus at Hippone.

object than that of going from one place to another on a donkey which is too small and which his wife follows on foot. So much of a wanderer that the "gourbi" of the Tellian and semi-sedentary Arab, a wretched hut, built of straw of which he only takes with him the principal beam, is less deserving of the name of a dwelling than is the tent of the pastoral Arab of the Sahara. He is however, admirable when he can satisfy his ancestral



Ruins of Announa.

taste for parade, luxury and the image of war, by mad, fanciful gallops and salvos of powder. At his worst, crowding together on the outside of the public vehicles, thus indulging his love of wild movement...

A race both proud and pitiable, aristocratic and decayed, which will only evolve slowly, and only within the limits of its religion.

What a change in the Kabyle!... Not that the Berber is always very different from the Arab. He is more thickset, with cheek bones more projecting and hair sometimes fair. But what differences in the instincts, habits and social condition and even in the psychological background. While the conqueror has, of his distant



Announa. Ancient Tibilis.



Ruins of Zana.

traditions or from Roman influence, retained above all external nobility, the burnous draped as a toga, an even, in the case of the Caid, the memory of purple, the Berber has retained the short tunic and the bare legs of the Latin colonists and that resistance to the elements, that agricultural tenacity which are no less Roman than the civic majesty and the chattering idleness of the forum. The Kabyle loves the land, and glories in the work which is despised by the Arab. He is an inveterate peasant, an out and out individualist, and does not hesitate to hire out his services in the Tell, to leave his own country, to become a trader, even abroad, but



Zana. Arch with three spans.

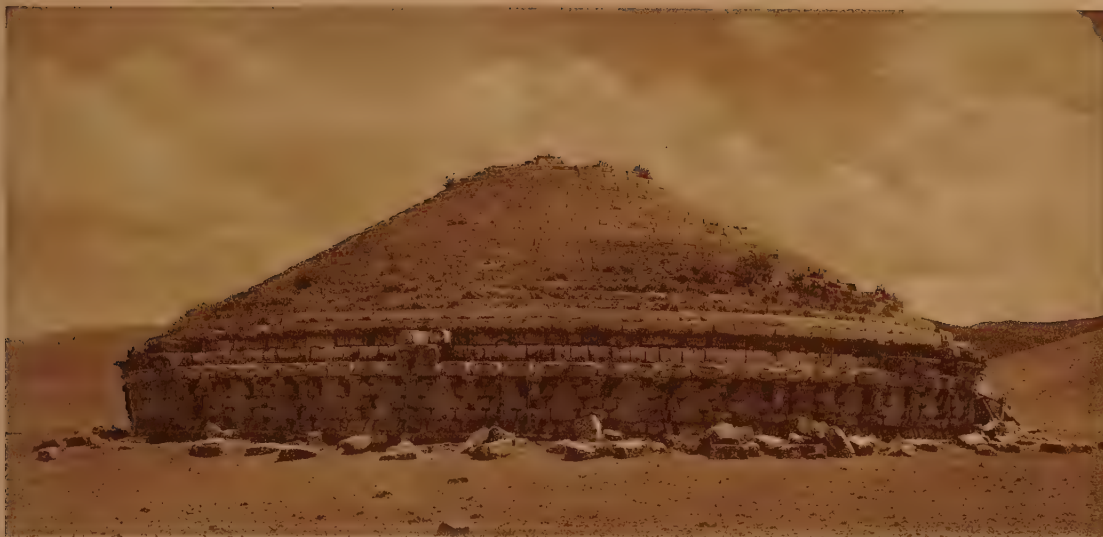


Market at Balna.

always with the hope of returning to his own country and buying land there. He is the Algerian replica of the inhabitants of Savoie or Auvergne. He is even more industrious than the French peasant, applying his leisure to the manufacture of small filigree jewels which he carries long distances or sells to tourists. His wives and daughters assist him in this, not veiled and shut up, but boldly uncovered, dressed in striped materials, wearing headdresses of bright foulards, almost neapolitan in their style. They are seen standing on the edge of the road



Batna. Slopes of the Djebel-Kasserou.



The Medracen near Batna.

as the motor-cars pass, brilliant and stately, silently stretching out beautiful bare round arms and offering their goods. They are, however, more under watch than the cloistered spouse; the vendettas of Arab husbands are mere child's play compared with these of the husbands of these women.



Marcouna.

For the rest, they are singularly republican in their social structure, divided into "cofs" in which all are equal, and practising in their small confederations an individualism carried to extremes, a passion for splitting up, which goes so far as to divide up a garden or even a tree among several families. There are, however, deliberative assemblies which recall the spirit of ancient democracy or even the modern Soviet, but with the most acute sense of personal property. The race, on the whole, is intelligible to the European mind, being akin in many points to our rural populations. It is capable of rapid evolution in European ways. As they grow up, the young Berbers set themselves about learning our industries and our arts and crafts.



Timgad. The Theatre.

The sea, detested by the Arabs, inspires them with no fear. Perhaps this mountain population will even soon supply the naval ratings which Algeria requires.

Still more barriers before the High Plateaux. The traveller who has not crossed the Kabyle mountain mass through the imposing Col de Tirourda, who has not essayed the touring Circuit of the Crêtes (Crests) du Djurjura—prepared by the General Government with an audacious anticipation of the future, and equipped with shelters by the Department of Land Settlement and Agricultural Engineering, through wonderful canyons, forests of cedars and lakes, lost at an



Timgad. The Curie.

altitude of 5,600 feet—that traveller will, between Bougie and Setif, on passing up the river Agrioun, find the Gorges of Anguish, or Death according to how one translates their rude and croaking name of Chabet-el-Akra. It is a sombre and austere passage, lit up, however, here and there by the hot African sun. Nothing human, except the tortuous road; a sky and a silence broken by the flights and cries of birds



Timgad. Arch of Trajan.

of prey; one of the most sublime moods of despair of nature. Gorges and Alpine heights are also met with between Jijelli and Constantine. They are followed by vast solitary stretches of agricultural land with just a touch of animation imparted here and there by the douars, with their mournfully barking dogs and night fires... The same ascent between Bône and Constantine, by Guelma. Guelma a pretty and bright little town, from the environs of which the traveller carries away two rare memories: that of an antique, spacious, moss grown and exceedingly pleasing nymphæa or nymphs' shrine, and that of Hamman-Meskoutine, a thermal oasis which boasts the terrifying name of Baths of the Damned. In truth, the boiling cascade wreathed with vapours, a small Niagara which sets, as it drops, in milky-white or ferruginous limestone concretions, looks like a true mouth of the mythological Hades.



Tebessa. Christian basilica.



Lambessa. The Prætorium.

As one advances towards the south, everything encountered is a surprise or a positive prodigy, from the economic point of view. The chain and the median depression of the Algerian system, less torrid than the valley of Cheliff, watered by less rare rains, fertilised below ground by their phosphates, become once again, as they formerly were, a wondrous storehouse of grain. On the west the plateau of Sersou, which, in 1918, was able to send grain in many hundreds of tons to the home country. The farms are enormous, like barracks, positive headquarters of agricultural cavalry, and



Tebessa.

a standing artillery of tilling implements ranged in batteries. On the east, the basin of Constantine and, more important, the plateau of Setif, ploughed and harvested in American fashion by the European colonists; a region of unbounded hopes, when once the rotation of crops of these immense stubble lands shall have been scientifically organised. It is also a region of glorious memories, of which are great examples: Constantine, Setif, Batna, Lambessa and Timgad, Kenchela, Tebessa, Madaure and Khemissa. What a "nest of Roman ruins", what a treasury of history, of delightful reverie and of national pride for Algeria!... For the Roman occupation was less a violent conquest or a tyrannical colonisation than a kindly disposed and enthusiastic Romanisation of the natives. The great African cities



Lambessa. Arch of Septimius Severus.



Madaure. Roman oil-works.

of Timgad, Tebessa or Madaure were native born, and it may be said that Algeria has here antiquities which are truly her own and which she must honour.

At the threshold of this pilgrimage, Constantine, in spite of Roman vestiges, has remained essentially the Cirta of the Numidians. Perched on hard rock, girdled by a moat, unique in the world, these Gorges of the Rhummel, the abyssmal depth and steep canyon slopes of which recall the images of the lower regions as conceived by Gustave Doré, Constantine, even modernised, in spite of the bridges, heavy and slender, which traverse this Algerian Acheron, still retains its aspect of



Madaure. The Theatre.



Borders of the river at M'sila.

an inaccessible fastness. Within it, dark traditions still survive. Other cities may take pride in their storks or doves, this city every year offers its familiar vultures a horrible sabbath feast... In its old streets, native life goes on, singularly



Market at M'sila.



M'sila. The Arab town.

animated owing to the amusing grace of its little Jewish girls, with the pointed caps, painted-up like women. For the rest, a considerable city which lives energetically beneath a hard climate.

Here are the great cities of the Roman epoque, so miraculously preserved by barbarism itself, which, after having pillaged and overthrown them, disdainfully



M'sila.



Marabout at M'sila.

allowed them to become submerged under the sands, thus protecting them unintentionally against a still more formidable vandalism which would not have failed to demolish them systematically, or to dress them afresh to the successive tastes of the following ages. The stones of these buried cities—when Timgad was discovered, a man could hardly pass his arm beneath the



M'sila.



El-Kantara. The Gate of the Desert.

arch of triumph—were dislocated and broken up almost completely. Nothing, or hardly anything, modern was built over or even around these ruins. Jemila—the now forgotten town of Cuiculum—was more hidden and forgotten



Barrage of the Oued of El-Kantara.

amid its circle of ruddy rocks than a desert island in the midst of the ocean. The sites themselves had been ravaged by the Arabs, the woods had no doubt been felled ruthlessly by the Romans to feed the hypocausts of their Thermæ and villas. The Roman ruins of Northern Africa have the priceless advantage of solitude over those of Europe : the naked past rises up there with full and unimpaired



Oued of El-Kantara.

intensity. Here they are, these military colonies or these municipia, so fully charged with history, built, as noted by M. Albertini, not at points made defensible by steep slopes, but, with the admirable confidence which Rome possessed in her authority and prestige, "in a situation intermediate between wild isolation and over-easy access". No ramparts, at any rate before the Byzantine period, magnificent city gates, but purely decorative and, so to speak, festive, triumphal arches of Trajan, at Timgad, or of Septimius Severus at Lambessa.



Gate at Tolga.

Patently exhumed, partially set up and restored, column by column,



Mosque of Tolga.

but without imprudent venturesomeness or arbitrary embellishment, these are ideal ruins and, if one may use the expression, adjusted to a nicety, sufficiently incomplete to inspire the melancholy of the dead past, sufficiently restored to make the plan of these towns evident and to make them still seem peopled and alive. Shorn, alas, of their statues but rich in inscriptions in enormous letters, in a clear and deep glyptic character which was perhaps the Roman art par excellence. Nothing is so moving as these mystic dedications which celebrate, with equal emphasis, perhaps a great historical fact or the donation of a municipal fountain, one of the high divinities of Olympus or the memory of a simple flamen. Roman inscriptions, which are an antici-



Mosque of Sidi-Okba.



PL. III

MOSQUÉE DE SIDI-LASSEN.
PRÈS BISKRA.

MOSQUE OF SIDI-LASSEN, NEAR BISKRA



Street of Sidi-Okba.



Interior of the Mosque of Sidi-Okba.

pation of our modern press, were so keen a pastime that the Lazzaroni of Tingad spent their time in making them on the paving slabs of the forum : "To hunt, to bath, to play, to laugh, such is true life", says one of these engraved *grafitti*.

These towns were the result and the emblem of Roman peace and happiness such as one must hope to see spring up again in these regions. Traces of considerable towns and large populations must not however be looked for here. Apart from Roman Carthage, the only one, with Cesaræa, the population of which perhaps exceeded one hundred thousand inhabitants, they were, at most, the equivalents of our very small country towns. The illusion of cities of numerical importance has arisen



El-Kantara. The red village.

from their monumental luxury. What wealth, indeed, what an ample and grandiose scale of city structures, and, in spite of the official character of the plans, what a variety of aspects and impressions!... Here, the strictly methodical and measured distribution of dwellings of Timgad, which recalls the first camps of the legionaries, is surrounded by sumptuous gates, one of



Street of Siḍi-Okba.



El-Kantara. The white village.

which, the Arch of Trajan, still exists, richly gilded by so many centuries of sunlight. This chequer-work of streets is broken here and there by spacious open-air monuments, by a forum or theatre. It is extended outwards by a capitoline temple, denoted by two high columns, twin and solitary, which seem imperiously to command the bristling mass of broken column



Environs of Borǧ-Medǧez.



Borders of the Oued of El-Kantara. The red village.



Street of the red village.

shafts of the entire city; also Thermæ or baths of immense proportions. Solemn style and majesty, even in the public latrines... This collective opulence was the final and supreme state of a well directed democracy. But the architecture of official surveyors which constitutes the originality of Timgad, was not everywhere triumphant. Lambessa, although marked out by the formidable and geometric proportions of its Prætorium, possesses more fancy. Jemila delights by its charmingly wandering character and the coquetry of its monuments. Its capitoline temple combines attic grace with the grace of the Wingless Victory. Here we understand what must have been the serene and voluptuous life of the peacemakers of the world, in the mosaic-paved houses, in



Gorges of Titalou.

the marble-slabbed Thermæ, adorned with roses, furnished with beds for rest, with bronze tripods, peopled by the harmonious silhouettes of the pagan divinities... Delicious moments in which the most refined of civilisations peacefully enjoyed life, without perceiving the whirlwinds of dust thrown up by the vandal cavalry.

Here, grouped near the Tunisian frontier, are the towns which, shaken by this first cyclone, hastily restored and fortified by the Byzantine domination, hoped for one moment to return to their past splendour. Rome had constructed them and provided them with all the resources of her architectural genius. Tebessa—the complete disinterment of which promises a vast and more complete Timgad—possesses the most ambitious



Date-gathering.



Fountain at Sidi-Barkat.



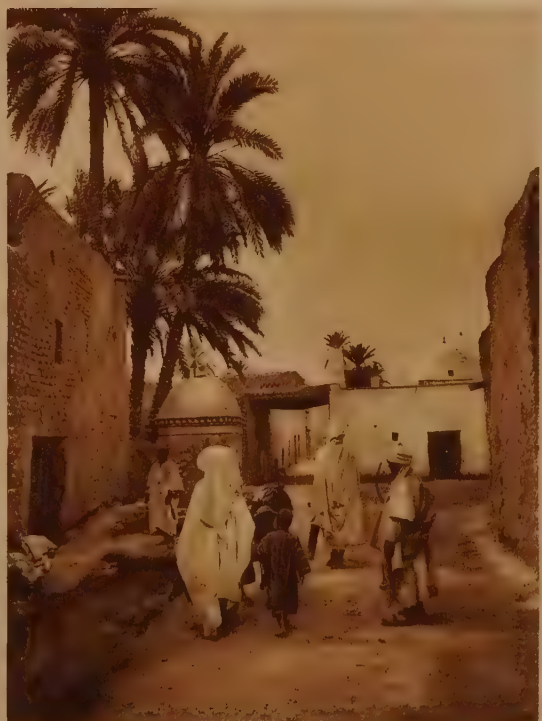
At Biskra.



At Sidi-Barkat.



Village of Bab-Darbb, near Biskra.



Sidi-Barkat.



Tolga. Caravan at rest.

of the triumphal arches, that of Caracalla, square, massive, a monument rather than a gate, and a Temple of Mercury, the grace of which, in its ensemble, causes us to forget the mediocrity of the details. Khemissa, isolated in a



Biskra. The great prayer.

hostile site, still lives in the aspect of its streets, its theatre and, above all, its piscina, a watery mirror the eternal youthfulness of which has suffered no blemish by the ruin of the stones. Madaure, along with the colossal stone blocks of its theatre, remains intact with its Roman oil-mills, the memory of its great agricultural industries. Most certainly, the monuments of the Christian centuries, which are further additions to its civic art, do it no discredit.



Biskra. Seguia in the Landon Garden.

Christianity the world over, has no sufficient idea of the rich reward which would be reaped from a pilgrimage to the eloquent religious antiquities of the dead cities of Algeria. For example, the Byzantine basilica of Tebessa, with its triple shell, its columns and its porticos still standing, the monk's cells still visible; a positive religious city, an abbey in fact before the word itself was coined, and which the new faith set up over against the monuments of pagan pleasure. Finally, the painful signs of decay, and fall, the sinister evidence of the invasion, of the short resistance and, then, that singular landslide, that incredible panic which seized the old world in face of the barbaric hordes. A warning of history. Yet at Tebessa, a Byzantine



Street at Tolga.



The oued El-Abiod, at M'chouneche.

wall of defence participates in the grandeur and the style of the preceding ages. But to-day, how pitiful are those little Byzantine forts, walls hastily run up at the last moment, with haphazard material, rough stones, fragments of columns and of friezes!... A lamentable architecture in which are written the utter confusion and distraction of a civilisation which was abdicating to brutal force!

But now, quite close to these sad memories of the past, the present offers inestimable wealth, deposits capable of "appreciably altering the industrial status of Algeria."

In the Oranais region, at Beni-Sef, are iron ores which yesterday were still being worked in open workings.



Spinning woman at M'chouneche.



M'chouneche.



Canyon between Arris and Rouffi.

In the valley of Chelif, in the Dahra and the Zaccar, Rouina and the mines of Beni-Akhil display the massive towers of their roasting kilns. Elsewhere, copper, lead and zinc show their presence by extensive hutments standing out with their flat roofs, on lands which are naked at the surface but wealthy below, the mines of La Laverie or the Guergour. But hopes, and, indeed, realities already, are still more magnificent close to the Tunisian frontier, almost in the shade of the antique ruins. Here, between Madaure and Tebessa, there are the boundless promises of the vast natural stores of iron and copper of Ouenza. Lower down, on the flank of Djebel Kouif, there is the outcrop of that wide strip of phosphate strata which, running from Tunisia to Morocco, is suffi-



Canyon of the oued El-Abiod.

ciently abundant to, one day, rival the exportation of American phosphates. This spells an industrial and commercial future of infinite possibilities, if ever Algeria, in her own subsoil discovers the "bread of industry"—coal. Indeed, it has already gathered the first fruits, in the coal mines of Kenadsa which are being so successfully worked beyond Colomb-Bechar, by the Algerian State Railways. Now there is the melancholy journey through the High Plateaux, the country of sheep and alfa grass. Vast spaces falling away here and there into depressions or "shotts", such as the Hodna. The average altitude of this region is 2,300 feet, often rising to more than three thousand, which entails a severe climate, alternately glacial and torrid. They are solitudes, but in



Rassira.

appearance only. All the life there is, in fact, is close to the soil. Short and dry vegetation of the alfa, swaying like the sea; meagre crops of cereals; a grass which grows under the shelter of the clumps of brushwood, thin but tough,



Rassira. Interior of the Guelaa Oulaḍ Yīḍir.

sufficient to feed millions of sheep and goats which, almost invisible, swarm in immense numbers over these pasture lands. The oueds or water courses with their low, ill-defined banks, with their sometimes changing beds, only show water at times of flood and then find strength to shake the structure of their bridges. A soil faintly tinted with verdure in the early spring, but soon changing to



Rouffi and the Fondouk Hotel.

that dirty and desolate clay colour which would be indefinable to anyone who has not seen it if it were not described by the word "tawny". Nobody settles willingly on such soil : villages counting a thousand souls such as Chellasa, are an exception, and there is no further occurrence of small towns until we reach the alpine heights of Geryville or Djelfa, already outside Algeria proper and in the Territories of the South. Everywhere else, human life seems to crawl and climb along these high plains. They are dotted here and there by the tents of the nomads, brown and shapeless, looking, when seen from the distance, like heaps



The oasis of Rouffi.



Gorges of Tigbanimine.

of refuse, and their caravanserais, low-built constructions, forming occasional inns which, in the dirty dust, snow or mud, do not even possess the clean and bright nobility of the poor huts of the Sahara.



Women of Aures.

These regions, however, though sad, are not poverty-stricken. They are better, no doubt, than some valleys of the Tell, with living streams, perennial springs and small barrages. Barley, sparse but precious, is reaped there. The alfa is compressed into cubes and is used for paper making. Above all, these plains boast of sheep-breeding and of that broad and regular migration, the positive heartbeat of Africa, which, from winter to summer, brings the nomads every year from their stony lands or Saharan dunes to the grasslands of the Tell, over more than six hundred miles of track, in their quest of grass, the achaba of their thousand-year tradition; with



Aures. Guelaa of Haiza.



A Guelaa at Baniane.

their moving treasure of livestock in the shape of sheep, which asks for nothing better than to increase from the day on which its range of drinking water supplies is continuous and reliable and when safe shelters shall protect the flocks against the snow storms.

Before reaching the Sahara, a last and a very big surprise : the Aures. The high plateaux, from wide in the west, have narrowed towards the nord-east. The platform has tapered away and the Sahara barrier has been rising until it reaches the 7,550 feet of the Chelia and of the Kef Mahmel, giants of Algeria.



Djemorah (Aures).



Gorges of Tigbanimine between Arris and Rouffi.



The oasis of Djemorah.



The oasis of Rouffi.

It has also been folded into narrow and steep valleys. The result is a landscape of wild and eerie effect, a climatic Janus or gate-keeper, the northern face of which belongs to the temperate zone, being cold in winter, while on its sheer southern face, dates ripen in the sun. In less than sixty miles, the thickness of the mountain mass, the entire range of climates is comprised between the Tell and the Sahara. From the summit to the foot of these longitudinal valleys, oued Abdi and oued Abiod, there are abrupt changes. Here, in spite of the adage, nature does proceed by leaps and bounds. The Aures, which is a second Kabylia, but half Saharan, recapitulates in brief and rapid succession, within a distance of sixty miles, all the contrasts of Algeria.



Menaa.

This region is little known, however, less so than Tuggurt or Figig, which is reached by rail and less also than the M'zab, the mysteries of which have been revealed by the motor-car. In the Aures, the roads suitable to the motor-car do, indeed, in the near east, penetrate to the heart of the country, but here they stop dead, leaving the rest of the journey to the mule and the legs of the traveller. In the same way as it defended itself against the Romans, who have only left their one famous inscription, in the same way as it resisted the Arabs, among whom a Berber Judith, Kahena, for one instant stemmed the tide, in like manner the Aures has defended itself for a long time against the curious by the mere savagery of its gorges and paths.



Environs of Rouffi.



Menaâ.

It was an act of peace and confidence which threw it open to tourists, and a more nobly audacious act perhaps than that of the Roman senate putting up for auction the soil on which Hannibal was encamped.

In June 1927, at the very time when thoughts of revolt were being fostered, M. Lutaud, Governor General of Algeria, without military apparatus, unfurled the tricolour flag at Menaâ, on a modest fondouk-hotel, the first stage of the Circuits of the Aures. All fear of sedition and of anxiety disappeared from the



Caravan returning from the South.



Menaä. Valley of oued Abdi.



Menaâ.

path along which he trod. Four other fondouks were created at Djemorah, M'chouneche, Rouffi and Arris, modest and discreet, profaning neither the sites nor native style. Once again, pacifically, the Aures was conquered, by France, a conquest due to hardly anything more than a visit to the valleys of Abdi and Abiod!... From Batna to Biskra, we again meet high peaks, long snow-covered, which share the strenuous climate of the High Plateaux.



Chaouian Dancing Girls.



Menaâ.

After this comes the descent towards the south, in a broad, double stream of water and alpine verdure, bringing a succession of pleasing views. Then, progressively, the hotter sun which soon becomes ardent, the smiling laurel rose-trees on the banks of the oueds; rocky hills, mauve or copper coloured, according to the incidence of the light; prolific fruit gardens; finally, the dazzling drop into the

primary beauty of the Aures, those gorges of Maafa, Tighanimine or M'chouneche, the first of which clearly mark the entry into the country of the date palm, the sudden apparition of palm groves nestling warmly in the golden crucible of the rocks. Oueds and torrents of such narrowness are met with that their beds have to be followed with the feet in the water or a foothold obtained along goat paths by clinging to the walls of the canyon. All the surprises of touring in a savage world. Ten leagues from the casino of Biskra one lives again in the world of Fromentin. Humanity



Women of the Aures.



Radjou. Environs of Arris.

in this strange country is found perched on rocks or against them, out of an old instinct of defence; Menaa, perched on a hillock, Beni-Souik or Bouzina stretching out their flat terraces, Amentane overlooked by the watchtowers, Arris with



The oued El Abiod.



Market at Bu-Saada.

its swarm of hamlets above the valley. On dizzy balconies, the "guelaa" of Baniane, with their two stories and treble pentices, both barns and citadels at the same time, seem to live in dread over the depths beneath. Here, however,



Borders of the oued at Bu-Saada.



Mosque Bab-el-Darb.



The oued at Colomb-Becbar.

assisted by the oueds, by the springs and by impounding works in imitation of the Romans, the intelligent race of the Chaouia, brothers of the Kabyles, have created a comparative Eden, where luxury of raiment flourishes. The women are dressed elegantly, particularly with wondrous headdresses of stuffs wound round and round, or pointed turbans inclined to one side, which are in comical contrast with their grave faces. Even joy, in the Aures, has a touch of austerity. The Chaouia dancers, adorned like rustic Madonnas, practise only very sedate dances with short steps, the movements barely outlined.

It is indeed a curious country. When the cinematograph was called upon to depict the Hoggar of legend, equally savage and luxurious, barbaric



Street near Bab-el-Darb.



Garden at Lagwat.



Ouled-Nail at her toilet before the dance.

and refined, Rouffi was chosen as the place to set up the tripod.

.....

And then, the Desert, the Sahara... Two words around which so many legends have crystallised and so many scientific or political passions have grouped themselves, yet without public opinion being quite clear as to their definition. "A country of mirages", writes Mr. Demontès, "both for authors who have written learnedly or humourously about it, and for tourists whose curiosity has contented itself with visiting a few oases near Biskra".

What was known of the Algerian desert in the middle of last century?... One need only read a page of "Un été dans le Sahara" (A summer in the Sahara) written in 1853, at Lagwat, in



Ouled-Nail, at Lagwat.

which the author, with eyes turned towards the south, loses himself in geographical dreams, imagines Mozabite towns "as big as Algiers", an Archipelago of oases, wondrously irrigated and fertile. These dreams were those of our generation of university men. Many a poet preferred to picture the arid and unconquered desert, a country of phantoms tortured by thirst, and martyred caravans... To-day, Lagwat resounds throughout to the hum of motor-cars and the veriest novice amongst their drivers is familiar with Ghardaïa, or even Timimoun.

Yet it is still a riddle to the majority, who do not know that in 1886, a German geographer, Rohlf, designed to grant the Sahara to the French



Lagwat, the great sequia.



Ghardaia.



Cemetery at Berriane.



Market Place at Ghardaïa.



Street at Ghardaïa.

as being the logical prolongation of Algeria, and that on the opening-up and crossing of this ocean of sand and pebbles depends the connection with the Niger, the future French Nile. How replete with heroism is the conquest of the Sahara! The massacre of the Flatters mission seemed to have sounded its death-knell. The dearly won successes of a too-heavy Saharan army over mobile adversaries tended to classify the question of the Algero-Moroccan frontier and the defence of the oases as among the insoluble problems. The escort of Mr. Jonnart, attacked in 1903, and the Homeric siege of the fort of Taghit, created extreme uneasiness in the public mind. Tranquility was not restored until the appearance of the right man, Colonel Lyautey, a disciple of Gallieni, an



Bou-Noura.

advocate of the theory of "pacific penetration", who carried it into practice. Laperrine continued the task and pushed as far as the Hoggar, in company with a famous hermit who was an explorer, diplomatist, philologist and meteorologist, the Père de Foucault. The assassination of the latter and the end of Laperrine, conquered only by the immense and inhospitable waste, represented setbacks but not retreats. They taught the public that the problem raised long before, by Flatters and Foureau-Lamy, had, according to the expression of Commandant Duclos, "been silently solved":— namely, the Desert pacified and the Sahara War reduced to police operations. Among the artisans of this achievement must be included the French engineers who



M'zabite well, at Ghardaïa.



Succession of wells, at Ghardaïa.

devoted their efforts to contriving new mechanical "ships of the Desert", during the long and still continuing period of waiting for the Trans-Saharan Railway.

This Sahara, formerly mysterious or disquieting, first manifests itself in a smiling form. Though Boghar, the last clump of verdure of Tell and the "balcony of the Desert" has only an outlook upon wild and arid spaces, farther to the east



Street at Ghardaïa.



M'zabite wells, at Ghardaïa.

the country of the date palm shews its presence by a faintly shaded "bled" of metallic salts, and delicate pearl tints, interwoven with shades of sky blue. Suddenly, from behind dazzlingly white sand dunes, an oasis appears at a strangely advanced point, that of Bou-Saada ; a long slender palm grove, a bright line of houses between two foothills of a dull violet. The picture involuntarily



Gate at Melika.



Guerrara.

suggests a jewel on a pile of dark velvet. More theatrical is the arrival at Biskra, through El-Kantara. The tradition of Aumale making the troops present-arms before the famous vineyards of Burgundy, pales in comparison with that of the



Ramparts of Melika.



The oasis of Beni-Isguen.



Artesian wells in the Oued-R'bir.

military bands of 1844 beginning to play, without order and of their own accord, inspired by enthusiasm at the appearance of the Gate of the Desert, a golden inset in front of a palm grove gleaming in sunlight and a sky suddenly cleared of all mist. Here there are two Saharan villages, and perhaps the spectacle of the first caravan coming from the south, with the mechanical and solemn tread of its camels heavily laden with fine woollen carpets, pointed "bassours", draped with brilliant clashing colours but which the sun blends into harmony. One need not, therefore, complain that Biskra itself has changed into a wintering station, that the luxury of its hotels vies with the attractions of a casino and golf links, and that the choreographic art of its Ouled-Naïl should be inclined somewhat towards



Gate and ramparts of El-Ateuf.



Street at El-Ateuf.



A street.



El-Ateuf.

stereotyped forms, if this oasis kindly throws open the desert to the curiosity of all...

Farther down, at the other end of the Atlas mountains of Algeria, are the seven villages or ksours of that oasis Figig which an astute treaty reserved to Morocco, but which is connected to the Algerian touring area by the railway which joins it with Oran: — a prodigious palm-grove spread out in a sea of verdure alongside the lake of Zousfana, and enveloped in so fine, so limpid a light that it has many times been compared with that of Egypt.



El-Ateuf.



Melilli.

Bu-Saada, Biskra or Figig are still, so to speak, "civilised" oases, thanks to their flowing oueds, and their abundant and open springs.

They have an agricultural value which exceeds the subsistence needs of their inhabitants. As stated by Mr. Mares, the waters of Biskra irrigate nearly 10,000 acres and furnish the water supply of 100,000 palm trees... Lagwat



Market-Place at El-Aleuf.



PL. IV

EL ATEUF. VUE GÉNÉRALE

EL ATEUF. GENERAL VIEW



The mosque at M'raier.

itself, situate near an oued capable of floods, with its seghia flowing full between its banks, still looks like a small river town, half native, half European. The wondrous upright stems of its palm trees, its gardens enclosed within walls, its streets rebuilt since the drama of 1852, everything, down to the track road and to its hotel buildings, seems to promise a second Biskra. However torrid it may



Street at M'raier.



Caravan at Djama.

be in summer, this Desert is not and has never been, that of the tragic novelists.

What exactly is, then, the "great Desert" which, since 1902, has had its own status and its own appropriation under the name of Territories of the South? "A country where there is no rain", was the first categorical answer of Mr. Demontes. Then, thinking better of it : "a region where, at a given point, between two storms there is normally a period of at least one year". To this may be added... "A country where water is naturally invisible, where seeking for and bringing it forth is the work of man and the condition of his existence.

To prospect for water, to utilise it, to



Old mosque of Ben-Djenane.



M'raier.

distribute it, that is the great business, even more so in the Sahara than in the Tell or on the High Plateaux. Without it, the void; thanks to it, a life, narrow no doubt and apparently at a sluggish pace, but important, nevertheless, owing to the effort which it entails and to the connecting role which it is destined to

play between the different section of French Africa. Useful life is not measured by its haste or its dimensions. A camel driver in the Desert is as good as an engine driver in our country, and the constructor of a small "foggara" is the equal of the builder of an aqueduct.

The various aspects of the Sahara—which is not, far from it, the bare solitude of the sands which legend describes—



Nomads at the gates of Tuggurt.



Market Place at Tuggurt.

are very much dependent-upon the forms taken by the quest for, and conquest of, water, and the human life which depends thereon. Intermittent and "half paralysed" oueds, such as the oued Djedi which skirts Lagwat, or the Saoura which, born in the Moroccan Atlas, foams up in annual floods all along the "Rue des Palmiers", and then disperses itself in the open Erg; "fossil" rivers, such as the oued R'hir, which only betrays its existence by subterranean waters: how strange a hydrographic system is that of the Desert.



Market at Tuggurt.



Arab Office at Tuggurt.

Stranger still when we remember that it distributes, oozes and conceals itself everywhere beneath the limestone crust of the "hammada", which is, as it were, the safe containing the invisible water, or among the sandstones, held together with clay, which acts as its invisible sponge. Water even lurks beneath the sand dunes and oozes out at times through their interstices. This is, indeed, the miracle of the Sahara; it would seem as though the water only hides itself in order to escape fierce evaporation and spares itself in order



Market at Tuggurt.



The Tombs of the Kings at Tuggurt.

that it may last. The irrigation of the Desert depends, strange to say, on this apparent aridity.

Hence, notwithstanding their air of abandonment, there is nothing so fully organised as these immense spaces in which each caravan stage entails a point of water supply and where not a palm tree, or a growing carrot or bean plant can be imagined without a well or an irrigation channel. For the painter, just as for the economist, there are three types of Desert: that of gushing wells, that of oozing wells and that of subterranean channels or "foggara".

If we follow, near Biskra, the course of the oued R'hir, we find the precious liquid in



Entrance of the oasis of Tuggurt.



The Tombs of the Kings at Tuggurt.



Musicians and Mirth-makers.

greater abundance proportionately as it is more deeply interred. In former times, heroic well-diggers, the *r'tassin*, of whom some specimens, shrivelled old men, survive, almost a religious order, dug the soil down to the water-bearing level and risked death by drowning in breaking through its rocky shell. Since 1856, French rock drills have put the work on an industrial footing creating a realm of artesian wells. There is Sidi-Okba, with streets of pale ochre hue, slashed by sun rays, the decrepit mosque of which houses the tomb of the Arab Attila, while its gardens offer tourists of note the exquisite hospitality of a Ben Gana, the *bach-aga* of the Zibans, as beautiful as a demi-god. The Ouled Djellal, with its



Djamâa Square at Tuggurt.



Market Place at Temacine.



Gardens of the Hotel Transatlantique at Tuggurt.

slender minaret; Tolga, where a new gusher has caused about 10,000 additional palm trees to spring up. Then, on the route of the little "white train", through a "bled" where the dried magnesia looks like large patches of glazed frost, is an uninterrupted string of oases, one of which, M'raier, as a result of a lucky boring, received a water supply of 10,000 gallons per minute. Finally, the big town and the neighbouring palm groves resulting from this abundance : Tuggurt, already completely Saharan by reason of its semi-arched streets, through which shafts of sunlight break through here and there; Tuggurt, where, on the night of a festival the writer saw more than two hundred girls, the Ouled-Nail, their



Temacine.

ornamental gold coins jingling, brightly dressed in many-coloured silks, dancing in front of fires of dried palmwood, their obscure rhythmic dances, with subtle pantomime, to the tune of the Arabian flute, nasal, lachrymose, and rather distressing. Then Temacine, Tamelhat; still farther on, another big city, Wargla, of the famous dates; that amber transparent date which no other climate produces and which the Arab has baptised by a metaphor, *deglat-nour*, "finger of light." To the east of Tuggurt, on the track which unites it with the south Tunisian oases, there is the Souf desert, overlooked by its capital, El-Oued, dotted with white close-packed domes just as the country itself is with dunes. Less extensive



Arab watering his camel.



Market at Temacine.

palm groves, but a fantastic patchwork of minute oases forming dark spots on the light sand—the “leopard skin” Desert of which Strabo speaks—where irrigation assumes a form unique in the world. No more water in sight, nothing but funnels from the bottom of which a few palm trees suck up a moisture which is

almost at the surface, while, to the tune of strange chanties, natives—agricultural replicas of Sisyphus—spend their days in raising up out of these holes the fluid sand driven into them by the wind.

In the M'zab, one hundred and twenty-five miles beyond Lagwat, Saharan geology, hydraulics and life assume a still more surprising effect. There is no more railway, and the track



Arabs at prayer.



Al Temacine.

is one which not even the best of springs will make very negotiable. A melancholy flatness, broken only by the flight of a few bustards, with a somewhat unusual play of mirages on the horizon—one has for a moment the illusion of an oak wood in Europe. — Here are rare *betoum* or pistachio trees, sprung from hollows or *daya*, the imperceptible moisture of which is sufficient for this tree which obstinately persists in living where the palm would perish. A caravansary—Tilrempt



Covered street at Temacine.



Beggars.



Minaret at Temacine.



Lake of Temacine.

—where the water is locked up and padlocked as if it were liquid gold. Then, a nameless desolation, the Chebkha, the first appearance of those cretaceous limestones, as rocky as their name sounds, which form the great plateau of the Sahara.



A Victim of Thirst.

It was in the midst of this desolation, or rather this void, built up of stones and rocks, made more frightful still by its undulations, that the martyrdom of a heretical and persecuted sect—the Ibadites—found, along with tranquility, an unforeseen reward—wealth. Fleeing before their enemies, these Mozabites, in former days, created seven towns of fine good stone, and as many oases, on the banks



Halt amidst the Dunes.

of oueds which flow barely once every seven years. Among these are Berriane and Guerrara, Ghardaia and its satellites, Melika, Bou-Noura, towns timorously and singularly constructed in the form of pyramids, on rocky knolls, all of them surmounted by a single dominant minaret, in the form of an obelisk, the blinding brilliancy of which seems to darken the blue of the sky. Here in the narrow streets where chiaro-oscuro triumphs, live the "quakers of Islam", uncompromising theologians, grasping and wealth-bloated merchants. The Mozabite goes to seek wealth in the Tell, a "moutchou" grocer and a usurer, but comes back



Wells in the Desert.



The Prayer in the Desert.



Zaouia of Temacine. Brick mosaic.

to rest and die in his holy town of Beni-Isguen, or in his less austere Guerrara, a city surrounded by cemeteries without verdure. Oases, however, are the only luxury of this wealth; irrigated at great cost, though with measured drops, by the water of three thousand wells, laboriously sunk into the limestone. The creaking of the pulleys is the eternal hymn of this thirsty soil. The M'zab, both rich and miserly, mystical yet hard and matter-of-fact, has been described as the most original country in the world; it is certainly the most defiant victory of man over the Desert. Still, the M'zab is only the vestibule of the townless Sahara, that almost absolute Desert which for-



The Dunes.

merly was left only to the camels of the nomads, to those of the Saharan companies, the military aircraft and the special motor vehicles of explorers, but which is now in process of being conquered for comfortable travel. From Ghardaia start the six-wheeled cars of that circuit of the Grand Erg by which the services of the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique have extended the limits of North-African touring as far as six hundred miles south of Algiers—about the distance between Liverpool and Barcelona—through the rocks, the sand and the oases of Gourara, the Touat and the Saoura; and now the bolder generation of our day will be able, beyond the Hoggar with its arid



"Rue de la Zaouia" at Temacine.



Wargla. Interior of the Mzabite mosque.



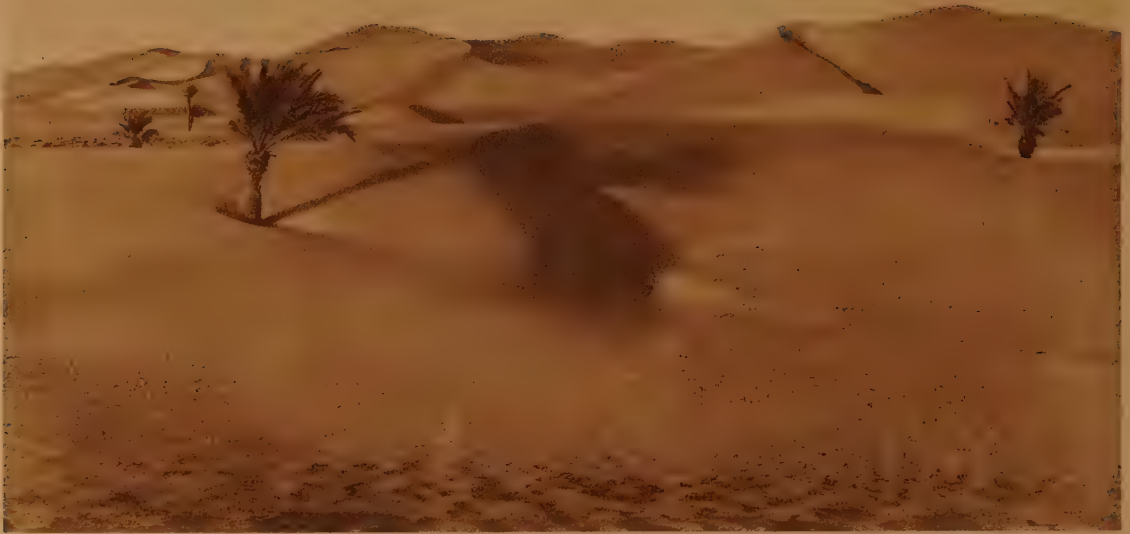
A Daughter of the Nomads.

mountains, its "Berbers with the *litham* (face veils)", giants of a white race, intelligent and chivalrous bandits, beyond even the Tanesrouft, to prospect by motor-car even as far as the Niger, Timbuktu and Gao, the route of the future trans-Saharan Railway...

Whoever has but merely circled the Grand Erg has, in truth, already received the baptism of the Desert. Memories of it are retained which no other journey can ever dim. A rough motor-road of stone bounds an enormous triangle of dunes running towards the south. Mocking the "measured pace of the caravans", the six-wheelers go ahead, both heavy and rapid, massive, yet gentle, and, for greater mechanical security, travelling in pairs. By this sign,



Market square at Temacine.



Wargla. Landscape of dunes.

the traveller recognises that he is entering into a new world. The very first few miles brings him into the land of mirage. Not merely the classical mirage by refraction which the eye speedily detects, but mirages more fairylike still, because they bear on realities, as our imagination persists in endeavouring to convert unknown visions into visions of familiar scenes and to people this mysterious solitude with familiar forms. When a start is made during the night, the limestone boulders lit up by the headlights take the shape of sleeping villages. When daylight comes, masses of bright stones appear in the distance like the haystacks of Beauce. Garas, rocky islets in tabular form, sunlit by a counter-light, seem to be covered with fresh fallen snow, or again with illusory vegetation. The real plants conceal themselves under unexpected forms and unusual



Wargla. Court of an arab mosque.



Wargla.

tints. Except for a miraculous rain which will cause this "bled" to assume a verdant form for a moment, the Saharan flora, stunted, thorny, protects its sap beneath a hard shell: powdery "diss", metallic "r'teb", frost sprinkled "d'moran", strange pasturages for camels, which one would imagine to be made of factory waste. Finally, an illusion which cannot be shaken off, produced by the small pyramids of rough stone which dot the track and which here and there in the



An interesting game.

distance assume the forms of Arabs with a flowing burnous, form the hedge along the way. However roughly constructed this track may be, by squads of natives who pave it by hand, block by block, it is the vital artery of the Sahara, the line which leads to the points of water supply, the insurance against death. The Lieutenant, chief of the station, must be proud of it. It was he who, perched



Square at Wargla.

on his mehari, designed and constructed the route. "Up to here", he told me, "it was eight metres wide, further on I had it widened to sixteen". One cannot help thinking of the civilised countries in which twenty sheets of official foolscap are requiree in order to shift a milestone. Here, we are in the realm of youthful and strong initiative. After these long solitary runs (a hundred miles



Beneath the arcades at Wargla.



The ramparts.



Market at El Golea.



The Ksar of El Golea.

or more might be covered without seeing a human being), the oases which mark off each stage truly possess the charms sung by the poets but under aspects which the latter had never imagined. That at a point sixty leagues lower than the scanty wells of M'zab an Artesian geyser should gush forth, and that El Golea should here be covered with marvellous cypress trees, should be favoured in February with violets, strawberries and exquisite oranges—this they had never imagined. It seems like a corner of Provence, including feudal ruins—for the Desert too has its eloquent reminders of bygone days. Here we find a ksar of reddish rocks, a citadel of dried mud, magnificent from afar in the sun, but so worn by the wind, so friable beneath the foot, that one feels as if treading on prehistoric remains. In the village, delightfully quaint scenes of Saharan life,



El Golea. The palmgroves.

tinged with French civilisation. In the market place, vendors squatting before a few handfuls of dates, their entire stock; idlers playing Arab chess, with the sand for their table; an old Officers' Mess changed into a pleasing hotel; a workshop of native tapestry created by the White Sisters where, behind the shade of their looms, girls, intent on their work seem to be twitching mute harps.

Other halts are of less pleasing aspect. There is the striking picture of Fort MacMahon, to-day abandoned to touring facilities, in testimony of the safety of this Desert. Two sinister palm-trees with their heads cut off by the wind, a small cemetery of the "Bat' d'Af", with inscriptions already de-



Marabout at El Golea.



Fort Mac-Mabon. A water point.



Street at Timimoun.

caying because engraved in that Saharan stone which, owing to the great divergencies of temperature between day and night, cracks like glass, and the sound of the cracking of which, when night comes, is held by the caravan-drivers to be the language of wicked djinns or evil spirits. Here is a watering point; a troop of thirsty grunting camels. Those who have not seen the camel amid his true surroundings, in these flat and far-stretching landscapes, do not know the special majesty of this half-wild ruminant, his "monumental" attitude, as a painter wrote, or "antediluvian", as a professor defines it, the comic pose arising from the broken lines of his legs, finally the air of solemn reverie and pretentious disdain with which this walker in exaggerated



Soudanese mosque at Timimoun.

slippers contemplates our mechanical conveyance. Moreover, will it not be his duty for a long time yet to provide their depots with the essential petrol? A fantastic animal he is from all points of view, exacting and particular, mentally pictured as the most moderate of animals, but really distending himself with water like a balloon with hydrogen, rather than go short of it, demanding his regular ration of forage and his six month's holiday to every six months of work. Having no other stoicism when put under privation, or when overworked, than that of dying suddenly, ironically, without notice or warning. For the rest, invaluable:—both docile and grumbling, devoted and tyrannical like those family servants whose



The gardens of El Golea.



Timimoun. The Hotel Transatlantique.



Street at Timimoun.

value is only felt on the day when they disappear.

Selected by breeding and baptised "méhari", here he is—at Timimoun, for example—regimented and barracked, but for a moment only. The stables would be his death, as the barracks are the death of the great and splendid *Chaamba*, yesterday pillagers, to-day gendarmes of the Sahara, who know the whole secret art of looking after the camel and only teach half of it to their chiefs, French officers and petty officers. The latter are admirable, accepting with a joyous resignation this peculiar form of solitude, always on the move and on the alert; military ascetics, the recruiting of whom might be more encouraged, if it is not to fall off.



At Timimoun.

Timimoun :— the typical oasis of the great Desert. Nothing European, except these huts and this staff of the Saharan Company and, on the Square, the slender pole bearing the wireless aerial which brings them the orders from beyond, seasoned at times with a "Charleston". The Hotel Transatlantique itself is constructed in Soudanese style—red mud brick, flat terraces, rooms with floors of beaten earth, with bright rugs here and there—and three days of rain, if the miracle were to occur might very well liquify



Market at Timimoun.



The palmgrove of Timimoun.



The Agba of Timimoun.

it as once happened with a part of the village... Otherwise, it is the unchanging life of the oasis, pacified by beneficent authority, relieved from the incursions of nomads and the ferocious ransoms which they imposed on the *ksouriens*, the serfs of the Saharan soil. The life of the oasis! What does that mean? A village well separated from the palmgrove and its nocturnal mosquitoes. A *ksar*, a few rough mosques, some *tatas* or huts of vermillion earth, as easily constructed as the sand-castles of our beaches. A population of white Musulmans, with a large addition of half-castes or "harratin" and others who are pronounced Soudanese, and whose wives with their plaited and pitched hair are loaded with all the "grigris", all the collars of red coral of



Timimoun. Irrigation Distribution channels.

Nigritia. Children of gleaming bronze, laughing, alert and friendly. We see the early-shrivelled muscles and creased skins of people who do not always get enough to eat. They have been saved from terror and slavery, but not from periodical famines. Brutal servitude having disappeared, there remains the servitude imposed upon them by the very nature of the country, owing to the impossibility of moving without camels and without provisions, an oasis is an enclosed circle. Not, as might be thought, a sort of terrestrial Paradise where each one lives on his own patch of sandy land, but a group of minute tenant farms the true owners of which, whatever may be done, remain powerful Arabs, Moroccan lords, who, at the time of the harvest come in great pomp in order, according to the witty expression of M. Gautier, "to detach their coupons".

This qualification having been made, the palmgroves appear charming. We are in the country of "foggara", an extensive and detailed system of



Beni-Abbes.

impounding which brings the water from beneath the adjacent heights and distributes it into an infinite number of idyllic streamlets, the use of which however is subject to a strict tariff in accordance with their size. Here a beautiful February morning is equal to a July morning in the pleasantest of lands. The palmgroves spread out in the form of an Italian garden, the streamlets dash along, gleaming and chattering, the beans already raise their greenish leaves to the height of some three feet, the ears of barley are well-formed and hard. There is the singing of birds, the sob of tree-frogs, the bleating of sheep, all the musical and soothing sounds of a countryside. The "harratin" are no more unhappy here than other men of the soil. Of evenings they will give the spectacle of their slow or frantically-moving dances, to the rhythm and their overpowering clatter of their iron "crotala" or castanets.

Ksabi is a solitary camp amid a wondrous panorama of dunes, which



At the Bend of the Grand Erg. The "Transatlantique" camp of Ksabi.

might be likened to some gargantuan milk pudding in which the spoon has dug round holes and drawn sharp edges, with effects of transparency obtained with tulles and muslins, blue and pink, superposed and rumpled. One will grasp the idea of what the dunes look like if described as freshly fallen snow but with an infinity of shades, on which footprints are as soft as the imprints of the ski. While this wizardry passes along the horizon,



Twilight in the Desert.

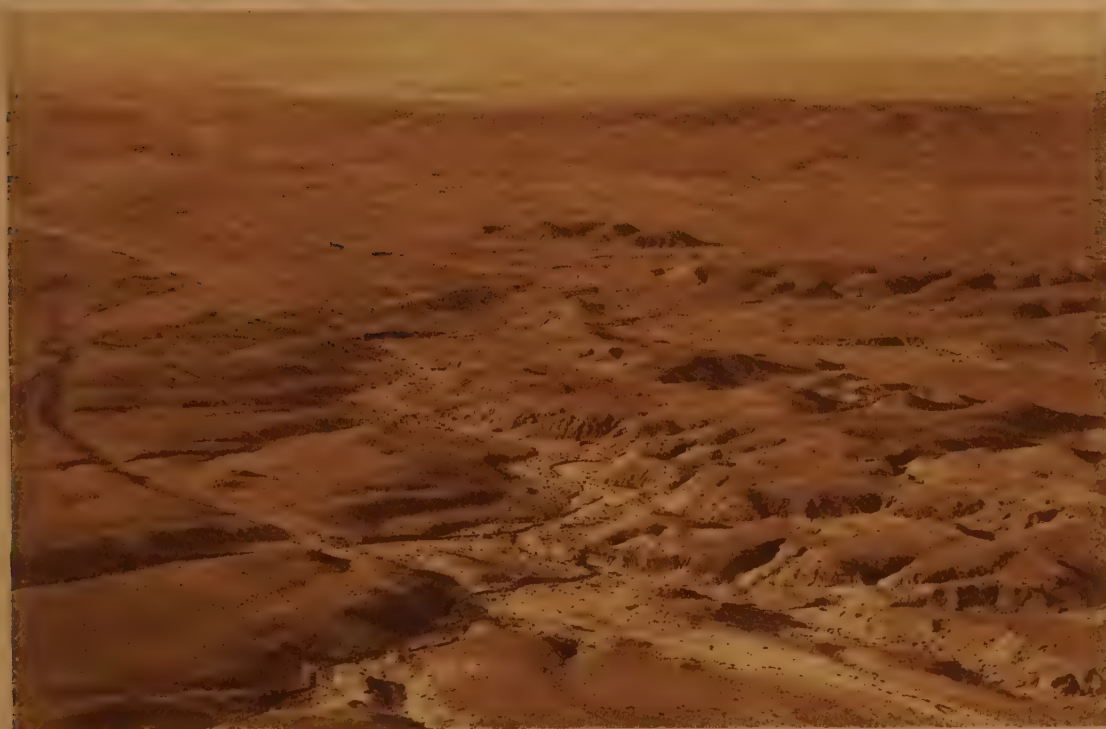
the tourist's vehicle is running over a strange soil, here made *verdegris* in colour by enormous mushrooms, but farther on black and brilliant and, as it were, paved with anthracite. For those who love the play of colours, nothing is more thrilling than this alleged monotonous Desert.

It is indeed as much diversified by the forms and archeology of human habitation as by the colours of the soil. On going along the "Vale of Palms", we come upon the enormous fortress of Timmoudi, a Coucy made of beaten earth, the remnant of an old-time Saharan feudalism. After the meagre oasis of Igli, where natives, stretched prone on their abdomen, watch us, sphinx-like, and wait for our leavings, like serfs around a monastery of the Middle



Ksabi. Tipping Well.

Ages, we see, lit up by the fierce rays of the sun, the massive architecture of Beni-Abbes, with its squatty clumsy arcades, its crude capitals and barbarous balustrades :— a “bordj” formerly forbidding but now converted internally into a pleasing inn. We cross the slender fillet of water of the Saoura, Saharan urchins floundering after us and pursuing our car at breakneck pace, future long-distance runners, capable later on of covering sixty miles in a single night, over



The sea of sand. View taken from an aeroplane.

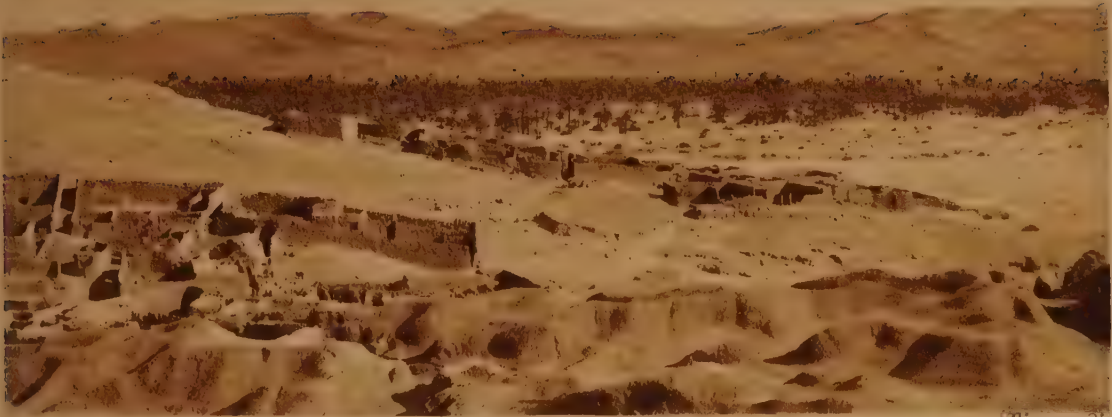


Timmoudi and its ksar.

the dunes. Gardens of the oasis, clumps of apricot trees, fig-trees and vines, hidden behind walls bristling with curious palm fronds, dominated by the slender canopy of the palm trees and above all, a remarkable ksar, with its narrow streets entirely covered, where the tourist can only travel, even by day, with a lighted candle in hand, strange catacombs of the living, a mass of obscure streets opening into brightly-lit homes, where the children swarm, the donkeys bray and the



Marabout near Beni-Abbès.



Timmoudi.

sheep bleat. Finally, the oasis and historic fort of Taghit, where three hundred men fought against three thousand Berbers :— a miniature Carcassonne of dried mud, so violently lit up that the reliefs disappear and one might mistake it for a slender studio design in cardboard. Here we witnessed a native burial and heard the wailing chorus of the women weepers who, motionless and prostrate, perform the rite. A frontier oasis which has not yet lost the memory of the



Hotel Transatlantique at Beni-Abbès.



Tagbit, view of the old fort.

"djicheurs" of the Tafilalelt and if we venture far from the palmgrove, the children pull us by our coats in ancestral fear of the Moroccan bogey. The traveller, nevertheless, enjoys his tea to-day on the crenellations of the fort in front of the dunes, which, in the light of the sunset seem saturated with blood.

.....
 Algeria, smiling or full of grandeur, Algerian Desert, the Sahara, the first stages of the route to the Niger. Is it possible to sum up a journey which was too rapid a picture of this North-African land into which France has put all its affection, all its energy and its most promising hopes?... A masterpiece



Old fort of Tagbit.



Tagbil. The palmgrove.

of French colonisation, it may be called without exaggeration, since the day when the work passed beyond the hesitating and disturbed period of its beginnings, and when opinions characterised by over-modest and systematic disparagement, gave place to a clear vision of the results obtained. It is a country which must be seen. M. Cagnat, in making a lyric comparison between the French and the Roman effort says :— "Rome took more than two centuries to make up her mind... We, (the French) on the other hand, made ceaseless advance, stage by stage, and traversed in less than twenty-four years, the path which



Dunes of the western Erg.



Tagbit.

Rome had taken three times that length of time to accomplish, and that, notwithstanding our internal dissensions and the jealousies abroad. We do it in the Roman manner, which was the grand manner, that is to say, improving the lot of the natives, substituting the Pax Gallica for their anarchy and their dissensions, finding both for themselves and for ourselves the precious water which had been forgotten or wasted by the barbarian, calling to the assistance of our colonists all races loving sunlight, justice and liberty. We had the reward during the Great War, not only in material assistance but in the form of the purest loyalty. Algeria is a crucible for turning out good Frenchmen.

This colonial miracle has, it is true, been accomplished by us in a land, the northern part of which is the geographical prolongation and the historic mirror of our own. The Algerian Corniche smiles in answer to the Riviera, the Jurjura responds to the lower Alps, the snow and the sites of the Atlas to those of the Pyrenees parallel with it. The vine land is but a continuation of France in Algeria. Here we find again, over and above Berber and moorish archæology, the sober and logical lines and the majestic conception



Palmwood of Tagbit.



In the Sahara.

Colonists, civil servants or even tourists, who thought merely to spend a short time there, remain bound to it for ever by an exquisite sentiment. That feeling—for Frenchmen at least—certainly does not imply that the metropolis has been forgotten. It is still the love of the homeland, but a homeland made stronger and rejuvenated by an infusion of new blood. It is the pride of belonging to a land of light and beauty, of fruitful energy, with a boundless future, which a hundred years of valiant labour have turned into something more and better than a colony, namely a powerful and magnificent extension of France.

of Latin architecture :—
Jemila and Timgad are the sister cities, better preserved, of Arles and Nimes. And if to-day Algeria has extended itself right into the Desert, if it aims at policing the latter and connecting France with the Niger, while pacifying the regions traversed, it will have been at the cost of heroic efforts and sacrifices which no one can deny us the credit. A second France, in truth, which already has its great men, its martyrs, its painters and its literature, in a word its traditions before even a century has expired. A second France, to which one becomes attached, just as to the other France, owing to the variety of its landscapes, and in spite of certain climatic rigours, by reason of a certain indefinable sweetness of life therein.

Georges Rozet

